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ON THE

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BY  
LUCIUS R. PAIGE.

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VOLUME II.

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# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE

### GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

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THE writer of this Gospel, though not an apostle, was a companion of the apostles, and wrote a history of their acts. He accompanied Paul on several journeys. See Acts, ch. xvi., xx., xxi., xxvii., xxviii. Beyond this, little is known of his personal history. If he was the same person who is named in Col. iv. 14, he was by profession a physician; and this may account for the fact, often noticed, that he describes both bodily and mental diseases with more technical precision than the other evangelists. By some he is supposed to have been a Jew; but the more common opinion is that he was a proselyte from the Gentiles. The purity of style and language in the preface to his Gospel is supposed to denote his Grecian origin; while his intimate knowledge of the Jewish religion and customs sufficiently indicates that he was a proselyte, if not a Jew. At what time he was converted to Christianity, we are not informed; nor at what time or place, or in what manner, his death occurred.

This Gospel is frequently referred to by the apostolical fathers, and attributed to Luke. Many of the ancients regarded it as substantially the Gospel preached by Paul. Thus Irenæus says, "Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him." And Origen describes it as the gospel "commended by Paul." Indeed, it was generally allowed to have canonical and apostolical authority, though not actually written by an apostle.

By some, this Gospel is supposed to have been written as early as A. D. 53; by others, as late as A. D. 64. It was evidently written during the life of Paul; for no account of his death is given in the Acts of the Apostles, and this Gospel had been previously written. See Acts i. 1; xxviii. 30, 31. This is as near an approximation to the true date as can easily be made from existing materials.

A remarkable variation is observable between Luke and Matthew, as to the apparent order of events recorded. But this may be accounted for by supposing, which is probable, that Matthew arranged the events *chronologically*, and Luke *classified* them according to their peculiar character, with less regard to the order of time.

As Luke was not an apostle, the question has been raised, whether his Gospel was written by inspiration, and whether it has equal authority with the others. (1.) Even if Luke were not inspired, his testimony is worthy of full credit; for he obtained information by diligent inquiry of eye-witnesses, ch. i. 1—4, and his fulness and precision in regard to names and dates corroborate its truth. (2.) This Gospel was published during the lifetime of the apostles, and there is no evidence that they doubted its inspiration; on the contrary, there is evidence that Paul approved and commended it, and that the apostolical fathers received it as having canonical authority. (3.) If it was examined by Paul, and published with his sanction, as is asserted by ancient writers, then it has the authority of inspiration, whether the evangelist himself were actually inspired or not. (4.) Its substantial agreement with the other gospels, together with its circumstantial variation, satisfactorily shows, on the one hand, that it was not copied from them; and, on the other, that it was written under the guidance of the same spirit of truth. Some have denied the genuineness of the first two chapters; but the best critics generally admit that there exists no sufficient reason to reject them, inasmuch as they are found in all the ancient manuscripts and versions now extant.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE.

## CHAPTER I.

**F**ORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in

## CHAPTER I.

1—4. Unlike the other evangelists, Luke prefixes to his Gospel an introduction, or preface. A similar peculiarity is discoverable in his narration of the labors, instructions, and trials, of the Apostles. Acts i. 1—14. This Gospel seems to have been composed for the special benefit of the person to whom it is dedicated; but its truths are equally important to all others, and are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Tim. iii. 16. I do not understand the author to vouch for the accuracy of the earlier narratives, to which he refers. He seems rather to propose establishing the *certainly* of the facts which were actually true, ver. 4. The meaning *may* be, that he wrote in imitation of a laudable example:—*forasmuch* as others had done well, therefore he also would perform his duty. But the former interpretation seems preferable.

1. *Many*. This term cannot well be understood to refer to the other evangelists; for, at most, only two had then written their Gospels, namely, Matthew and Mark; and it is unusual to apply the term *many* to that number of persons. Probably many narratives had been composed, which are not now extant, of the events connected with our Lord's life and ministry. It is generally understood that the writings which are now styled *Pseudo-Gospels* are of a much later date. We have no means of judging, therefore, how much or how little of truth was contained in the *many* narratives which preceded Luke's. ¶ *Have taken in hand*. Have under-

order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them

taken; have attempted. ¶ *To set forth in order a declaration*. To compose a narrative, or to write a history. ¶ *Most surely believed among us*. “Have been accomplished amongst us.”—Campbell. The word here rendered *believed*, ordinarily signifies to fulfil, or to accomplish. It sometimes means to persuade, or to convince. But I think no instance occurs of its use in the Scriptures, where its meaning is justly expressed by the term, *believe*. The evangelist seems here to assert not merely a *belief* in certain facts, but the *truth* of those facts. These things, that is, the facts which he is about to relate, have certainly been accomplished. Eye-witnesses have testified the facts. The facts being true and important, a correct history of them was desirable; and such a history the evangelist proposes to give;—even “of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.” Acts i. 1, 2.

2. It has been supposed by many commentators, that, in this verse, Luke admits the general correctness of the preceding narrations, but intimates that they were defective in some respects; so much so, that he judged it advisable to write a more complete and methodical history. But I think this does not express the exact meaning. The many former accounts, mentioned in ver. 1, may have been merely defective in fulness or style, or they may have been absolutely erroneous and fabulous, for aught which here appears to the contrary. Luke does not assert that those who preceded him wrote truly or false-

unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word ;

ly ; but he does assert that certain things were absolutely performed, and had been delivered or testified by eye-witnesses. Of these things, many had attempted to compose histories ; and they had performed their task with less or greater fidelity and perspicuity. In short, the implied appeal to eye-witnesses and ministers of the word has relation to the facts themselves, and not to any former professed history of those facts. ¶ *Eye-witnesses.* Probably the apostles are here particularly intended. A general reference may be understood to the early disciples, of whom there seem to have been several who had closely attended on our Lord during his whole ministry. See Acts i. 21, 22. Having seen the things whereof they testified, they were competent witnesses. 1 John i. 1—3. ¶ *Ministers of the word.* The reference is still, chiefly, to the apostles. They were ministers of the gospel, which is here, as often elsewhere, called the *word*. The seventy disciples, of whom many suppose Luke to have been one, and perhaps some other of the early preachers of the gospel, may be included.

3. *It seemed good, &c.* As others had professed to relate these facts, it seemed good, or appeared proper and necessary, to Luke, that he should give a more perfect history of them, inasmuch as he was qualified to do so by the more accurate and perfect knowledge which he had acquired. Thus would the defects of former accounts be supplied, if this were their principal fault, or their errors be corrected, if they contained such. ¶ *Having had perfect understanding, &c.* “Rather, having diligently traced out all things from the beginning ; that is, having gotten an exact account of all those things which happened, at the beginning, especially, from eye-witnesses, &c.”—*Pearce*. It is the general remark of commentators, that the common translation of this passage does not express its full force. The original implies, not only that Luke had *full understanding* of the important truths which he recorded, but that he had used active exertions to obtain that knowledge. The following

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to

observations by Clarke are worthy of consideration :—“ Having accurately traced up—entered into the very spirit of the work, and examined everything to the bottom ; in consequence of which investigation, I am completely convinced of the truth of the whole. Though God gives his Holy Spirit to all them who ask him, yet this gift was never designed to set aside the use of those faculties with which he has already endowed the soul, and which are as truly his gifts, as the Holy Spirit itself is. The nature of inspiration in the case of St. Luke, we at once discover : he set himself by impartial inquiry and diligent investigation, to find the whole truth, and to relate nothing but the truth ; and the Spirit of God presided over and directed his inquiries, so that he discovered the whole truth, and was preserved from every particle of error.” ¶ *From the very first.* This phrase is the translation of one word, which generally signifies *from above*. And hence some have supposed Luke intended to say, that he derived his information directly from heaven, or from God. But, however he obtained his knowledge, he seems only to assert that it extended to the whole period of our Lord's residence on the earth, and to all the events of his public ministry, even from the beginning. See the same use of the word, Acts xxvi. 5, by the same writer. ¶ *To write unto thee in order.* “To write a particular account to thee.”—*Campbell*. Le Clerc and some other Harmonists have understood the evangelist to refer here to the order of time, and hence have taken this gospel as the true standard, to which the others should be made to conform. But it is the general opinion, that the order of time is not so closely observed by Luke as by Matthew ; and that the word rendered *in order* does not imply an exact chronological arrangement. “From this word,” says Campbell, “we cannot conclude, as some have hastily done, that the order of time is observed better by this than by any other evangelist. The word does not necessarily relate to time. See Acts xviii. 23. The proper import of it is *distinctly, particularly*, as opposed

write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 ¶ **T**HERE was, in the days of Herod, the king of

to *confusedly, generally.*" No other sacred writer uses this word; and it occurs only in Luke i. 3; viii. 1; Acts iii. 24; xi. 4; xviii. 23. ¶ *Theophilus.* This is a Greek name, and literally signifies a *lover of God.* Some have supposed that Luke used this name, simply to denote Christians generally, without addressing any particular individual. But the epithet "most excellent" seems rather to denote an individual, and to be descriptive of his peculiar character, or rather of his rank or official station. It is not known what particular individual was intended. He is not elsewhere named, except in the dedication to him of the Book of Acts. On the subject of significant names, and their common use in the East, see note on Matt. i. 23.

4. *That thou mightest know, &c.* The definite object of the writer is here stated. He desired to confirm the faith of this disciple; and his testimony is equally important and valuable to all disciples. Stability of faith is essentially necessary to our peace. We should examine the doctrines of the gospel, until we attain a moral certainty of their truth. Then, and not before, may our faith become firm and abiding, able to sustain us in every trial. ¶ *Instructed.* Literally, *catechised.* The meaning is, however, sufficiently expressed in the text; for the evangelist probably refers rather to the fact that Theophilus had been taught, than to the peculiar manner in which he had received instruction.

5. *Herod.* Generally styled Herod the Great. See note on Matt. ii. 1. ¶ *Zacharias.* It may be observed, as one evidence of the fidelity of the sacred writers, that they are generally so careful to give names and dates;—particulars in which fabulous narratives are notoriously deficient. We have no particular account of this Zacharias; but his name and the class of priests to which he belonged being mentioned, the Jews were able to identify him by their registers. "They are very little

Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the com-

versed in the Holy Scriptures, and less in the Jewish learning, that could imagine this Zacharias to have been the high-priest, when he is said to have been but of the eighth course, and to have attained this turn of attendance by lot."—*Lightfoot.* ¶ *Of the course of Abia.* Abia here answers to the Hebrew Abijah; as Zacharias answers to Zachariah. For the reason of this difference in names, as written in the Hebrew and in the Greek, see note on Matt. i. 2. For the performance of the Temple-service, the priests were divided, by David, into twenty-four courses or classes; each class officiated one week, in its turn, thus performing the service two weeks in a year. See 1 Chron. chap. xxiv. Of these classes, the eighth was that of Abijah. When the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon, it would seem that only four principal families of the priests were with them. See Ezra ii. 36—39. These are said by Jewish writers to have been distributed, as on the former occasion, into twenty-four classes, to which the original names were assigned. ¶ *His wife was of the daughters of Aaron.* The wives of the priests were ordinarily of the posterity of Levi, though marriage was allowed with any of the stock of Israel, if qualified in other respects. But it was regarded as most proper and honorable for the priests to take the daughters of Aaron for wives. This Zacharias had done. And thus John the Baptist, whose birth is here related, descended, both by his father and by his mother, from Aaron, the first high-priest of the Jews, and was legally entitled to his rank as a priest. God appointed him to a higher office;—he made him a prophet, and the herald of our blessed Lord. ¶ *Elisabeth.* See the foregoing remarks concerning precision in regard to names.

6. *Righteous.* The parents of John not only descended from what was regarded as a holy stock, and occupied a sacred station, but in their personal

mandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren; and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

character they were pure and uncorrupt. Honorable descent is doubtless to be prized, and an honorable station to be regarded; but true honor, nevertheless, depends on individual character. The righteous man is to be respected by men, and he is approved before God, however unrighteous his ancestors may have been, or however humble his own station in life. And the unrighteous man is guilty before God and men, notwithstanding the piety of his ancestors. Indeed, such a one is properly considered worthy of additional disgrace for having disregarded the good example of his parents and slighted their instructions; and if he occupy an honorable station, it serves only, and righteously, to render his corruption more notorious, and to excite a more widespread and a deeper condemnation. Such, however, was not the case of John's parents. They were righteous; and their son did not disgrace their name. ¶ *In all the commandments, &c.* They were not of the number who despise all forms and ceremonies, asserting that religion consists entirely in other things. But believing that God has not commanded anything useless or unnecessary, and that all his requirements are designed for the benefit of his children, they were careful to walk in all his commandments and ordinances; that is, to obey them conscientiously.

7. In this verse, are mentioned two circumstances which rendered the birth of John the Baptist remarkable, if not absolutely miraculous. His parents, having never been blessed with children, were now well stricken in years; or, in more familiar terms, were old, or of advanced age.

8. *Executed the priest's office before God, &c.* In other words, while he was engaged in the public offices belonging to the priesthood, during one of the weeks allotted to his class. The ordinary duties of a priest were incumbent on him at all times. But reference is here evidently made to the public offices connected with the Temple-ser-

8 And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn

vice. The phrase *before God* may mean, generally, that all acts of public worship, being addressed directly to God, are peculiarly before him, or performed in his presence in a sense in which other actions are not, though all are manifest in his sight. Or, perhaps, the meaning may be more restricted, indicating simply that Zacharias was performing the duties of his office in the Temple, which the Jews regarded as the peculiar dwelling-place of Jehovah.

9. *According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was, &c.* The order in which the several classes of priests served at the Temple was established by standing regulations. See note on ver. 5. But the particular duties of each individual in any class were determined by lot. On this subject, Lightfoot quotes from Jewish writers thus:—"The ruler of the Temple saith, come ye, and cast your lots, that it may be determined who shall kill the sacrifice, who sprinkle the blood, who sweep the inner altar, who cleanse the candlestick, who carry the parts of the sacrifice to the ascent of the altar; the head, the leg, the two shoulders, the tail of the back-bone, the other leg, the breast, the gullet, the two sides, the entrails, the flour, the two loaves, and the wine. He hath it, to whom it happens by lot." The lot was determined thus:—the priests "stood in a circle; and the ruler, coming, snatches off a cap from the head of this or that man; from him the lot begins to be reckoned, every one lifting up his finger at each number. The ruler also saith, In whomsoever the number ends, he obtains this or that office by lot; and he declares the number; for example, there is, it may be, the number one hundred, or three score, according to the multitude of the priests standing round. He begins to reckon from the person whose cap he snatched off, and numbers round, till the whole number is run out. Now, in whomsoever the number terminates, he obtains that office, about which the lot was concerned.



incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of

And so it is in all the lots." Such is the manner in which the lots of the several priests is said to have been determined. But the Jews evidently had other methods of determining by lot. Prov. xvi. 33, "the lot is cast into the lap," &c., or, more properly, as some say, *into the cavity*, that is, of an urn or vessel often used for that purpose. See also Acts i. 23—26, where the method pursued was certainly different from that before described. ¶ *To burn incense*. The incense burned in the temple was composed of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense, in equal parts. Exo. xxx. 34. This mixture, when burned, emitted a very agreeable perfume. To burn this incense in the temple was regarded as the most honorable duty which a priest could perform. And it is said that this service was never allotted to any priest a second time. ¶ *Temple of the Lord*. The word here used denotes rather the sanctuary, the holy place, than the temple generally. The difference between *ion naon*, (τὸν ναόν,) here used, and *to ieron*, (τὸ ἱερόν,) in other places rendered temple, may be seen in note on Matt. xxi. 12. Briefly, the latter comprehended the various courts of the temple, in some of which the people were praying, ver. 10, while the former embraced only the vestibule, the holy place or sanctuary, into which none but priests might enter, and the most holy, accessible to the high-priest alone. In the sanctuary were placed the altar of incense, the table of show-bread, and the golden candlestick. This apartment was separated from the most holy by a veil, or, as some say, by two veils. See note on Matt. xxvii. 51.

10. *People were praying without, &c.* That is, in the courts, or other apartments, around the sanctuary. They were in the temple, in the common sense of that term. It was customary, when the burning of the incense commenced, to notify the people by the ringing of a bell; and they immediately commenced praying, in silence. It may not be impertinent to observe, that, according even to the Jewish law, acts of religious worship were not regarded as particularly efficacious to any except

the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him

those who personally united in them. It was not sufficient that the priest burned incense in the name and behalf of the people; the people themselves must offer prayers, in order to obtain the full benefit designed. Much more, under the Christian dispensation, it is not sufficient that the minister of Christ offer prayers in the sanctuary, however fervently, while the thoughts of the people, like "the eyes of a fool, are in the ends of the earth." If they would receive benefit, they also must pray, uniting with the leader in his supplications, confessions, ascriptions, and thanksgivings, or pouring out the fulness of their own souls in their own language before God. Men cannot acceptably worship by proxy. Personal devotion is as indispensable as personal righteousness. See John iv. 23.

11. *An angel*. A messenger. See note on Matt. i. 20. In this place, undoubtedly, a divine messenger is denoted. The place and general character of the interview, the declaration in ver. 19, the nature of the communication made, and the remarkable effect produced on Zacharias, all concur in proof that this messenger was not a man like one of us, but a ministering spirit of a more exalted rank. ¶ *Standing on the right side, &c.* This was a good omen, according to the opinion of the ancients; while an unusual appearance on the left hand would be regarded as an indication of misfortune. As the altar of incense stood at the west end of the sanctuary, near the veil which concealed the most holy place, and as the priest must necessarily have stood with his face towards the altar, the angel was seen standing on the north side, where stood the table of show-bread, the golden candlestick being on the south side. Exo. xxvi. 35; xxx. 6. The altar of incense was made of shittim-wood, which, according to Jerome, "grows in the deserts of Arabia, like white-thorn in its color and leaves, but not in its size, for the tree is so large, that it affords very long planks. The wood is hard, tough, smooth, without knots, and extremely beautiful; so that the rich and curious make screws of it for their presses. It does not grow in cul-

an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

tivated places, nor in any other places of the Roman empire, but only in the deserts of Arabia."—*Calmet*. The altar was eighteen inches square, on the top, and its height was three feet. Around the top was a crown, or elevated band, and at each corner a horn. On the sides were rings by which it might be removed. The whole altar, with its horns and rings, was overlaid or plated with pure gold. See *Exo. xxx. 1—5*. This altar was exclusively devoted to the burning of incense, morning and evening; neither burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering, nor drink-offering, belonged to it; nor was it to be stained with blood, except once a year, when it was to be legally purified by touching its horns with the blood of a bullock and a goat, and by sprinkling some of the same blood upon the altar itself. *Exo. xxx. 7—10*; *Lev. xvi. 18, 19*.

12. *He was troubled, and fear fell upon him.* It may be difficult to assign any satisfactory reason for the fact, yet I think it will not be disputed, that any supposed supernatural appearance uniformly excites fear in the human breast. Especially is this true, when such an appearance is witnessed by one who is alone, as was the case with Zacharias. Perhaps his fear was the more oppressive, through the influence of an opinion, common among the Jews, that the appearance of a divine messenger betokened speedy death. See *Judges xiii. 21, 22*. But, without any such apprehension of impending dissolution, the sudden and unexpected appearance of an angel would naturally trouble any one, and fill him with fear.

13. *Fear not.* It is worthy of remark, in regard to the supernatural appearances recorded in the scriptures, that as uniformly as men have expressed fear, so uniformly have the celestial messengers assured them there was no real cause for it. *Fear not* is a common salutation on such occasions. *Judges vi. 22, 23*; *Dan. x. 12*; *Matt. xxviii. 5*; *Luke i. 30*; *ii. 10*; *v. 7—10*; *Rev. i. 17*. In this is manifested the love of God, that when he makes extraordinary

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and

communications to his children, as well as in the usual dispensations of his providence, he designs their benefit. This is one of the evidences that he is truly "good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." *Ps. cxlv. 9*. Even the events which usually inspire the most intense fear, if viewed aright, will be perceived to be blessings from God. ¶ *Thy prayer is heard, &c.* From what follows, it would seem, that, with his prayers for the people, Zacharias had mingled one petition for himself individually. Some suppose he had been praying for the speedy manifestation of the Messiah, and that this was the prayer here mentioned. But the general purport of the angelic address indicates rather that he had prayed for offspring,—a blessing of which he had hitherto been destitute. The desire for posterity was peculiarly strong among the Jews; and it was considered the severest misfortune to die childless, and to have one's name perish from among the people. The hope of being a progenitor of the expected Messiah may have had an influence in making this desire more strong, and the disappointment more bitter. But whatever may have been the cause, the fact is perfectly evident in the scriptures. See *Gen. xv. 2*; *xxx. 1*; *1 Sam. i. 11, 27*.

14. *Thou shalt have joy and gladness.* The desire of offspring being so strong, its gratification would produce joy and fill the heart with gladness. But in addition to this natural joy, Zacharias was assured he should experience the happiness of having a son, worthy of his love and his prayers; a son, illustrious beyond all his predecessors; *Matt. xi. 11*; a son, who, though not the promised Messiah, should be his herald, and should induct him into office by the rite of baptism. Well might a father rejoice in such a son; especially when that son's moral character was as pure as his office was honorable. ¶ *Many shall rejoice at his birth.* By birth should be understood not the mere event only, but its consequences. The character and conduct

gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the

of John were such, that not only his parents, but many others, had occasion to rejoice that he had been born; in other words, that he lived. His personal labors, in preaching repentance and inducing men to break off their sins by righteousness, were highly beneficial. His testimony concerning the Messiah was productive of joy and consolation to men. Therefore should they rejoice. The meaning of the whole verse may be thus expressed:—Thou shalt rejoice, and many others also shall rejoice, in this thy son; for he shall not only be a blessing to you, but a blessing to mankind, to the world at large.

15. *Great in the sight of the Lord.* That is, truly eminent. Many are great in the sight of men, who lack the moral qualities of true greatness. Such men, however much applauded by their fellows, cannot be accounted great when measured by the rule of righteousness. But such is the rule according to which God judges the comparative greatness of men; and by the same rule our Lord has instructed us to judge. 1 Sam. xvi. 7; John vii. 24. According to this rule, John was great in the sight of the Lord and of good men. He was virtuous himself, and he labored to make others virtuous. He did not hesitate to rebuke iniquity even when decorated with royal trappings; but, at the hazard and even the sacrifice of his life, bore a steady and unflinching testimony against all unrighteousness and ungodliness. These traits in his character are noticed in the remainder of this announcement, and fully developed in his character, as recorded in the scriptures. ¶ *Wine nor strong drink.* Wine is well understood to have been the juice of the grape; though many of the filthy and poisonous compounds, which now pass under that name, are destitute entirely of grape-juice. By the strong drink, some understand distilled liquors; but others deny that the Jews understood the process of distilling, and suppose fermented liquors to be intended. Pure wine, before fermentation, is not intoxicating; but by fermentation acquires this quality. Hence it is supposed that, by the prohibition against wine and strong drink, wine both new and old is

sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the

forbidden; or, in other words, that the prohibition extends to intoxicating drinks, and to those which are liable to become such. The word rendered *strong drink* is *sikera*, (*σίκερα*) from which some derive the word *cider*. "Some think that by this name was meant a liquor made of dates, the fruit of the palm tree, a drink much used in the East. But I see no reason for confining the term to this signification. The word is Hebrew, *shecher*, and has been retained by the Seventy interpreters in those passages where the law of the Nazarites is laid down, and in the rules to be observed by the priests, when it should be their turn to officiate in the temple. The Hebrew root signifies to *inebriate* or *make drunk*. All fermented liquors, therefore, as being capable of producing this effect, were understood as implied in the term. *Strong drink* is not the meaning. It might be impossible by words to define intelligibly the precise degree of strength forbidden, or for judges to ascertain the transgression. For this reason, the proper subject of positive law is kinds, not degrees in quality, whereof no standard can be assigned. For this reason, all liquors, however weak, which had undergone fermentation, were understood to be prohibited, both to the Nazarites and to the priests during the week wherein they officiated in the temple."—*Campbell*. In the foregoing note is suggested the true principle of temperance. It is idle to distinguish between different intoxicating drinks, as strong or weak, hurtful or innocent, dangerous or safe. The only safe course is to abstain utterly from any and all drinks which can intoxicate. Every prudent man will observe this rule as closely as if he were bound by the law of the Nazarite. If he depart from it, he does so at his peril,—a fearful peril. A remark of Lightfoot deserves notice, for its quaintness, and for the hint it suggests, even though we do not admit the truth of his supposition. "Whilst I a little more narrowly consider that severe interdiction, by which the Nazarite was forbidden the total use of the vine, not only that he should not drink of the wine, but not so much as taste of the

Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of

grape, not the pulp nor stone of the grape, no, not the bark of the vine; I cannot but call to mind, whether the vine might not be the tree in paradise, that had been forbidden to Adam, by the tasting of which he sinned. The Jewish doctors positively affirm this without any scruple." One thing may be regarded as certain: that, since the days of Noah, scarcely any one cause has produced more sin and misery on earth, than the use of wine and other intoxicating drinks. ¶ *Filled with the Holy Ghost, &c.* That is, shall be under the special influence of a spirit of holiness, even from his birth. The event fully confirmed the prediction. From his earliest years, he practised righteousness, and labored with untiring energy and zeal to persuade others to do likewise. He was a chosen servant, appointed and fitted for a special duty; and the divine spirit guided and sustained him in its performance.

16. The character of John having been described in the former verse, in this and the succeeding his office and the results of his ministry are denoted. ¶ *Children of Israel.* One of the common names of the Jews; so designated on account of their descent from Jacob, otherwise called Israel, in distinction from the other posterity of Abraham. *Shall he turn, &c.* That is, by preaching repentance, by warning them of their danger, and persuading them to forsake their sins and to produce the fruits of righteousness. The manner in which he performed his task may be seen in Luke iii. 1—18. Similar forms of speech occur in Acts iii. 26; xxvi. 13, 20; 1 Thess. i. 9.

17. *Go before him.* "That is, shall go before God, or in his sight. As in verse 6, it is said that they were righteous *before God*; so verse 15; so Luke xii. 6. No reference is probably made to Christ."—*Livermore.* If by this be intended simply that the conduct of John should be manifest in the sight of God, or that his steps should be guided by him, I think the full meaning of the phrase is not exhibited; nor do I believe that a direct and pointed allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ can be properly excluded. That the phrase

Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him

*enopion autou, (ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,)* here rendered *before him*, is to be understood like the similar phrases in verse 15, and Luke xii. 6, I do not deny. But the full force of the verb *proelcusetai* (προελεύσεται) is by no means expressed by the common translation, *he shall go*. This word conveys the idea of *going before*, or *preceding*; some other person or thing, in point of time or place. Besides this text, it occurs in Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark vi. 33; xiv. 35; Luke xxiii. 47; Acts xii. 10; xx. 5, 13; 2 Cor. ix. 5; in all which cases, it has this meaning; and its use by the LXX. is the same. Hence, as is well observed by Wakefield, "the proper purport of the beginning of this verse is not at all conveyed in our version, and scarcely can be without a circumlocution. To be *before God* means here, as in ver. 15, and 19, to be in the character of a *divine teacher* or *messenger*; and in this character, John was to *go before* some other person." And that this other person was the Lord Jesus Christ appears evident from Malachi iv. 5, 6, to which this verse has a strongly-marked resemblance, compared with Matt. xi. 10—14; xvii. 10—13. The sense of the whole phrase seems to me to be this: "He shall go before (the Messiah) in the sight of God, in the spirit and power of Elias;" or, *he shall go before*, that is, precede, the Messiah as his appointed herald or precursor, *before him*, that is, before or in the sight of the Lord God, ver. 16, *in the spirit and power of Elias*. On the whole, it may be concluded, that, notwithstanding the word *him* does not refer to Jesus, yet there is an allusion to him as the Messiah whom John was to precede. And, on the other hand, though the word *him* undoubtedly does refer to the Lord God, it does not follow that Jesus is that Lord God; because John is announced as the precursor, not of *him*, (that is, of God,) but of some other person, in his sight or by his direction. To this long note I will add only one remark: let the common translation be regarded as perfectly correct; let *him* mean Jesus, and at the same time refer to God or stand in the place of God; still it will not

in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the

follow that the Son is identical with the Father. Coming in his name and by his authority, to execute his work, it would be agreeable to Scripture usage to speak of his precursor as going before God, inasmuch as he was the representative of God. Similar figures of speech occur, Exo. xvi. 8 ; Acts v. 4. On the same principle are founded the declaration of our Lord, John xii. 44, 45, and his argument, John x. 30—33. ¶ *In the spirit and power of Elias.* Possessing a personal character and endowed with powers, resembling those of Elijah the prophet. John does not seem to have exercised miraculous powers, like Elijah. But in arousing men from the lethargy of sin, exciting them to repentance, and bearing an open and manly testimony against iniquity, wherever it existed and by whomever practised, there was a striking similarity between the two. To this similarity the succeeding words refer. See note on Matt. xi. 14. ¶ *To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.* The language of the prophet, to which this is similar, is somewhat more full : “he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers.” Mal. iv. 6. These words have been variously interpreted. Some prefer to translate, “to turn the hearts of the fathers *with* the children ;” and thus to understand a general turning from evil. Others suppose particular allusion is made to the discordant sects among the Jews, who cherished a violent antipathy towards each other ; and understand a general reconciliation among them to be predicted. Others, again, imagine the Jews are denoted by the fathers, and the Gentiles, by the children ; and understand that the enmity between them should be overcome, and they should together embrace the gospel. There may be somewhat of truth in each of these interpretations. But, in my judgment, we shall apprehend the meaning with sufficient accuracy, without going into particular details, by supposing the allusion to be to the grand fundamental

angel, Whereby shall I know this ? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God ; and

principle of Christianity,—a spirit of universal love. When men shall love God with the whole heart, and shall love each other fervently and universally, the hearts of fathers and children shall be turned together and united effectually ; and such love is inculcated and required by the gospel, to which John called the attention of his brethren. ¶ *And the disobedient, &c.* “And, by the wisdom of the righteous, to render the disobedient a people well-disposed for the Lord.”—*Campbell.* In the same rendering, substantially, Pearce and others agree. According to either version, the general idea is sufficiently obvious. By the sacred writers, holiness is called wisdom ; and iniquity, folly. By giving heed to the precepts of wisdom and obeying them, thus forsaking sin and practising righteousness, men would be prepared to enter that kingdom of the Lord which is “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. xiv. 17. It was the office of John thus to prepare men for the Lord, or dispose them to receive him gladly. Accordingly he commenced his ministry by exhorting to reformation and to the breaking off of sin by righteousness, in view of the speedy approach of the Lord. Matt. iii. 2 ; Luke iii. 2—18.

18. *Whereby shall I know this ? &c.* The promised blessing appeared so improbable, and so inconsistent with the ordinary course of nature, that Zacharias doubted, and desired some evidence of the fact. He evidently had not prayed in faith for offspring ; perhaps he had only lamented his misfortune, while engaged in the devotions of the temple ; at the least, he staggered at the promise, when made, and expressed doubts of its fulfilment, as did Sarah of old, Gen. xviii. 10—15. For his slowness of heart to believe, the sign which he demanded became a punishment to him, verse 20.

19. *I am Gabriel.* To remove the doubt of Zacharias, the angel first announced himself as a divine messenger, and therefore entitled to implicit credit ;

am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until

and then, verse 20, foretold an event which should be at once a confirmation of the truth he had uttered, and a punishment for unbelief. Gabriel signifies "God is my strength, or, man of God, or, strength of God, or, my strong God." —*Cruden*. This angel is mentioned by name, Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21. See note on verse 11. ¶ *That stand in the presence of God*. The figure is taken from earthly courts, in which admission to the presence of royalty, and the privilege of rendering personal services to the ruler, are accounted highly honorable; inasmuch as free access is allowed only to such as have the confidence of the sovereign, and none but those whose loyalty is well approved are permitted to minister about his person. To stand in the presence of God, therefore, indicates that the individual was a faithful and trusty servant of God. ¶ *And am sent, &c.* It is represented as one of the peculiar employments of angels, to convey messages of kindness from God to men, or to execute his gracious purposes concerning them,—thus ministering to the heirs of salvation. Heb. i. 14. The same idea is suggested, Matt. xviii. 10. It is certain that men are enabled to assist each other in acquiring knowledge and practising righteousness; and I see nothing unreasonable in the supposition, that angels may be thus employed on extraordinary occasions. In regard to their willingness to perform this service, the following remark of Barnes deserves notice; and, for its general sentiment, it is worthy to be written in letters of gold: "Holiness is the same as benevolence; and holy beings seek and love opportunities to do good to their fellow-creatures. In the eye of holy beings, all God's creatures are parts of one great family; and whenever they can do them good, they rejoice in the opportunity, at any sacrifice." ¶ *Glad tidings*. To wit, that his desire for offspring should be gratified, and that his son should be so much more eminent, and virtuous, and useful, than he could ever have anticipated.

20. *Thou shalt be dumb, &c.* Ham-

mond suggests, that, from this phrase, we should understand that Zacharias was both dumb and deaf; inasmuch as his friends questioned him by signs, ver. 62, and as a portion of this verse would otherwise appear superfluous. But the word *σιῶπαθ*, (*σιωπῶν*), here used, is not the same which is ordinarily translated dumb, nor does it seem to indicate inability to speak. It occurs seldom in the New Testament; uniformly signifies to be silent, or to refrain from speaking; and is in no other case rendered as in the text. See Matt. xx. 31; xxvi. 63; Mark iii. 4; iv. 39; ix. 34; x. 48; xiv. 61; Luke xviii. 39; xix. 40; Acts xviii. 9. The meaning of the phrase is, thou shalt be silent, and not able to speak. There is no superfluity, as the two members of the sentence express different ideas; the first, that he should be silent, and the second, that his silence should be occasioned by a miraculous deprivation of the power of speech. ¶ *Until the day, &c.* That is, until the birth of the child; not until all the other predictions were fulfilled. A part being put for the whole, the birth of John, on which the remainder depended, and indeed that which chiefly staggered the faith of Zacharias, is represented as a complete fulfilment of the prediction. Accordingly, we find the father speaking with freedom and glorifying God for his grace, ver. 64, when the son was only eight days old. ¶ *Because thou believest not*. This inability to speak is represented both as a sign that the prediction should be accomplished, and as a penalty of unbelief. To disbelieve the word of God, when communicated by an authorized messenger, is uniformly represented in the scriptures as criminal. And if all who thus disbelieve, because they think the blessing is too rich for God to bestow, or because they regard its bestowment as improbable or impossible, are not literally dumb, they are, at the least, incapable of praising God according to his excellent greatness, and their lips are silent in regard to his richest mercies.

21. *Marvelled that he tarried so long*  
It was not usual for the priest to re-

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

main in the sanctuary, while offering incense, more than half an hour. Zacharias seems to have remained longer, on this occasion, insomuch that the people were amazed. It may be, they feared also that some harm had befallen him; for not only was he absent an unusual time, but probably he was motionless in presence of the angel, so that no sound proceeded from the bells on his garment, to indicate his safety. See Exo. xxviii. 33—35.

22. *They perceived, &c.* Either, his inability to speak was regarded as sufficient evidence that he had witnessed a supernatural appearance, or it occasioned suspicions which were confirmed when they questioned him. ¶ *Vision.* Literally, sight, or perhaps rather a thing seen, or an object of sight. But, in the New Testament, it uniformly denotes a supernatural appearance. This word occurs only in Luke xxiv. 23; Acts xxvi. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 1. ¶ *Beckoned.* Made signs with the hand; the meaning is not limited to the peculiar motion generally denominated beckoning.

23. *Days of his ministration.* That is, the week during which the class of priests to which he belonged served, in their turn, at the temple. See note on ver. 5. ¶ *Were accomplished, he departed, &c.* Notwithstanding this visitation, by which he was deprived of speech for a season, Zacharias did not desert his post of duty, until discharged in due course. His example is worthy of imitation. Slight discouragements should never make us remiss in the performance of duty. And even though disabled in one form, we may still do good in some other; if we cannot labor in word, we may labor in deed, and thus

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of

make ourselves serviceable to men while we obey and glorify God.

24. *hid herself.* Some have imagined that she confined herself absolutely to the house, lest she should accidentally contract any legal uncleanness by walking abroad. A more probable interpretation is, that she lived in retirement, or did not appear in public. She would not proclaim the blessing prematurely, but cherished the promise in her own heart.

25. *Reproach.* Among the Jews, an abundant posterity was regarded as a token of divine favor, as is evident from many places in the Old Testament. For example, Gen. xxii. 17; Ps. cxxvii. 3—5. On the other hand, unfruitfulness or barrenness was considered an indication of divine displeasure, and a subject of reproach. See Gen. xxx. 2, 23; 1 Sam. i. 6. To this kind of reproach, the text refers; it had been taken away, by anticipation, in that promise of posterity, which the angel made.

26. *In the sixth month.* That is, about six months subsequently to the appearance of Gabriel to Zacharias. ¶ *Galilee.* See note on Matt. ii. 22. ¶ *Nazareth.* See note on Matt. ii. 23.

27. *To a virgin, &c.* See note on Matt. i. 18. ¶ *House of David.* Family of David; posterity of David. Joseph was of this family. Luke ii. 4. So also was Mary. See note on Matt. i. 2—16. It is supposed by some commentators, and apparently with good reason, that the reference here is specially to Mary; and they propose a different arrangement of the language, thus: “to a virgin of the house of David, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” As Jesus is so emphatically denominated the “son of

the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

David," and as Joseph was only his reputed father, the lineage of Joseph was of less importance than that of Mary. And, moreover, in the genealogy in chap. iii., it is generally supposed that the descent of Jesus from David through Mary is given. The reason why Matthew and Luke traced the pedigree in different lines, is suggested in the note on Matt. i. 2—16. It is more consistent with the apparent object of Luke, to suppose him here to refer to Mary as a daughter of David, than to Joseph as his son.

23. *Highly favored.* "By being the mother of the long expected Messiah, the mother of the Redeemer of mankind. Long had he been predicted; long had the eyes of the nation been turned to him; and long had his coming been an object of intense desire. To be reckoned among his *ancestors* was accounted sufficient honor for even Abraham and David. But now the happy individual was designated who was to be his mother; and on Mary, a poor virgin of Nazareth, was to come this honor, which would have rendered infinitely illustrious any of the daughters of Adam,—the honor of giving birth to the world's Redeemer, and the son of God."—*Barnes.* ¶ *The Lord is with thee.* The verb is not expressed in the original; and the phrase may be understood as a declaration of God's peculiar favor, as the common translation implies, or as an invocation of divine blessings,—the Lord be with thee. ¶ *Blessed art thou among women.* Among Christians in all ages, the mother of our Lord has been held in the highest respect. Many indeed have absolutely worshipped her. And if idolatry in any form could be justified, this would seem to be one of the permitted cases; for none of the daughters of Adam, nor any

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

mere man, was so intimately connected with God's richest gift to his children. She may surely be regarded as peculiarly blessed, distinguished from all other women, by the high favor bestowed on her.

29. *Troubled.* Rather, perplexed, or amazed. She did not comprehend the meaning of this salutation, nor understand in what manner, nor for what cause, such an illustrious destiny awaited her. Whether, at first, she recognized her visitant as an angel, does not distinctly appear. But whatever idea she might have had concerning his character, his salutation was mysterious, and she *cast in her mind*, or considered earnestly, what it might mean. It would seem, from what follows, that her perplexity was mingled with some apprehension.

30. *Fear not.* See note on ver. 13. She was assured that God was her friend, and that this visitation was an evidence of his love. It was an act of grace to her in particular, designed for a universal blessing. So far as she might apprehend any calamity, as the result of this divine appearance, her fears were banished by this assurance. Indeed, the character of the message was sufficient for this purpose. And so far as she might have been unable to perceive *how* she was to be thus blessed, and have feared there might be some delusion, this fear was also dispelled by the assurance that God designed to bless, who was able to perform his whole pleasure and to bestow blessings according to his own will. The manner of the blessing announced is unfolded in ver. 31—33.

31. *Jesus.* The Saviour, by way of eminence. See note on Matt. i. 21.

32. *He shall be great.* Jesus was truly illustrious. He was highly ex-



33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that

alted in power, being subject alone to Him "which did put all things under him." 1 Cor. xv. 27. Hence he is styled "Lord of lords and King of kings." Rev. xvii. 14. Not only was he great in power and dignity, but he had also that true greatness which consists in moral purity and the principles of fervent and universal benevolence. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled by sin. He spent his life in labors of love, died in the cause of humanity, and with his expiring breath invoked divine forgiveness upon his murderers. ¶ *He shall be called.* That is, he shall be, according to a Hebrew idiom of frequent occurrence. ¶ *The Son of the Highest.* That is, the Son of God. In one sense, all are the sons of God, whom God has created in his own image. But Jesus was the Son of God in a peculiar sense; being born not according to the will of the flesh, but according to the miraculous exercise of divine power, and being endowed with those moral qualities which made him the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Heb. i. 3. His resurrection, also, as miraculous as his birth, demonstrated him to be the Son of God. Rom. i. 4. ¶ *Give unto him the throne, &c.* Not an earthly throne. John xviii. 36. But as David was anointed king of God's peculiar people, the Jews, so was Jesus constituted a spiritual "Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31.

33. *Reign over the house of Jacob, &c.* In other words, over the children of Israel, the ancient covenant people of God. This, however, does not express the full extent of his dominion, unless we understand the house of Jacob here to mean the same as the "Israel of God," Gal. vi. 16; where the Gentiles are included with the Jews. It was

holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

36 And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren:

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the

anciently promised, that he should have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Ps. ii. 8. And the apostle declares that every enemy shall be subjected to his power, and shall yield the same willing obedience to him which he yields to the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. ¶ *Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* The apostle declares that Jesus will surrender the kingdom to the Father, when it shall have triumphed over all opposition. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Yet it may properly be called endless, inasmuch as the same principles of government will be perpetual, and its fundamental principle of love will never cease to exercise its purifying and life-giving power.

34. It may be observed that the question of Mary was put in a different form from that of Zacharias, ver. 18. He expressed a doubt, and desired evidence. She seems not to have doubted the truth, but desired information *how* the promised blessing should be bestowed. His question was improper, and hers proper, so far as we can judge from the answers, in the two cases.

35. In this verse it is declared, that the birth of the Saviour should not depend on human agency, but that it should be the result of divine power. This declaration was sufficient to remove all difficulty from the mind of Mary, and to assure her heart that what God had promised, he was able to perform. On the subject of the miraculous conception, see note on Matt. i. 18. ¶ *Holy thing.* Rather, holy progeny. ¶ *Shall be called the Son of God.* See note on ver. 32.

36, 37. *Cousin Elisabeth.* Rather, relative, or kinswoman. Elisabeth was of the tribe of Levi, ver. 5, and Mary of Judah. They may have been actually cousins on the side of their mo-

handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda,

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that

thers, but not on their fathers' side. What is added here might serve to confirm the faith of Mary in the promise, by demonstrating that with God all things are possible.

35. *Behold the handmaid, &c.* By this expression, Mary indicated the most perfect submission to the will of her heavenly Father, and faith in his promise. And such should be the state of feeling cherished by all. Whenever God indicates clearly his will concerning us, we should cheerfully acknowledge ourselves his servants, and accept the lot appointed to us, in full faith that it is designed in mercy. And even when the event is not so distinctly revealed to us, as to her, it becomes us to cherish such an unfaltering confidence in our heavenly Father's goodness as will enable us to say, Thy will be done; be it unto us according to thy good pleasure.

39. *And Mary arose.* The word here used has a wide range of signification, from simply arising from a seat, to the resurrection of the dead. It seems here to denote simply a change from inactivity to action, and is equivalent to changing the quiet of home for the fatigue and possible danger of a journey. ¶ *Hill-country.* The region round about Jerusalem was so called. The city to which she went was in the land of Judah. It will be remembered that the Levites had no portion in the general division of Canaan, but were distributed among the other tribes. Hence Zacharias, though a Levite, dwelt in a city of Judah.

40. *Saluted Elisabeth.* Addressed her with the customary tokens of civility and affection. This visit was doubtless made in consequence of the annunciation to Mary that her kinswoman had been visited from on high. She would naturally desire to converse with some one, in regard to the mysterious communication which she had received,

when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

42 And she spake out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me,

and the events which followed. And no person would more readily occur, as worthy of confidence and capable of giving advice and encouragement, than a kinswoman, who herself had been made to realize the special grace and power of the Most High.

41. It is a probable supposition that Elisabeth understood, from what her husband had made known to her, by writing or otherwise, of his interview with the angel, that her child should be the precursor of the Messiah; but that she did not know of whom the Messiah should be born, until she was admonished by the circumstance here related. It does not appear that Mary had made known her interview with the angel; yet Elisabeth was so fully assured that the mother of the Messiah stood before her, that she unhesitatingly addressed her as such, ver. 43. ¶ *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* This phrase ordinarily implies the gift of prophecy; ver. 67; Acts ii. 4; and such seems to be its meaning here. The spirit revealed to Elisabeth the past, and enabled her to testify concerning the future; ver. 42—45.

42. This address is almost a repetition of the angel's language in ver. 28, 35.

43. *Whence is this to me, &c.* With meekness and humility, Elisabeth expresses surprise that she should receive a visit from one whom she esteemed so much more honorable than herself. ¶ *My Lord.* This term is of very wide signification, sometimes denoting the God of the universe, and sometimes only the master of a servant, or the husband of a wife. In all cases, however, it indicates superiority, and is addressed to those who are acknowledged to be superior in rank, or character, or authority. It was commonly applied by the Jews to the Messiah, and such is doubtless its meaning here. It does not, however, define the precise char-

that the mother of my Lord should come to me !

44 For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

acter or dignity of Jesus ; but merely indicates his superiority to other men.

44. This verse contains the reason why Elisabeth so instantaneously recognized Mary as the mother of the Lord.

45. *Blessed is she that believed, &c.* Mary was doubly blessed. She believed the divine testimony at once, and rejoiced in hope. See note on ver. 34. Moreover, the promise was certain of fulfilment, and she should not be disappointed in her hope of this signal blessing.

46. *Magnify.* Literally, to make great. The meaning, here, is to extol, or to celebrate the praises of God, that his majesty and glory might be more vividly apprehended.

47. *God my Saviour.* The appellation, Saviour, is generally given to Jesus. But it is also given to the Father by the sacred writers. Isa. xliii. 3 ; xlv. 21 ; 1 Tim. ii. 3 ; iv. 10. Such is its meaning here. Mary rejoiced in God as her Saviour, who had both the will and the power to save from sin and from all evil, and to bestow spiritual blessings.

48. *Regarded.* Literally, looked upon. ¶ *The low estate.* The humble condition in life. God did not select the mother of our Lord from the daughters of the haughty rulers or more haughty priests. But this distinguishing token of his grace was conferred on a humble and unassuming virgin, who, though a daughter of David, had hitherto dwelt in obscurity. Thus was manifested the fact that God is no respecter of persons ; and thus is additional confirmation afforded that Jesus is truly the Son of God. None can suppose that Jesus attained his illustrious position by any device of rulers, priests, or other

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden : for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things ; and holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation.

friends of power and influence. The obscurity of his birth, the original condition and occupation of his apostles, together with the continual and unmitigated scorn and fierce opposition he encountered from priests and rulers, afford the most satisfactory evidence of his Messiahship. For, under such circumstances, he could not have accomplished his work, unless God were with him. Acts v. 38, 39. ¶ *Call me blessed.* Shall regard me as one highly favored of God, to be selected from among the lowly and humble, and exalted to the high honor of giving birth to the Saviour of the world. She is certainly entitled to be honored by men in all ages ; but not to be worshipped, as by the Romish Church.

49. In this verse is an acknowledgment that this great and marvellous work was of God alone, and a devout confession of his holiness. *Name* frequently signifies *person*. If such be its meaning here, the acknowledgment of God's holiness is direct ; if otherwise, indirect, though none the less positive ; for if his name is holy, and ought never to be uttered but with feelings of reverence and pious regard, most certainly he himself is pure and holy, else his name could not deserve such honor.

50. *His mercy is on them that fear him.* His favor and grace are enjoyed by all who truly reverence him. Although "the Lord is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," Ps. cxlv. 9, and although "he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil," Luke vi. 35, yet it should never be forgotten, that none enjoy or truly realize his merciful kindness except those who reverence his name. His goodness will eventually lead all to re-

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant

pentance; but until men do repent, they cannot enjoy the happiness prepared for them. As God is the special Saviour of believers, while he is truly the Saviour of all men, 1 Tim. iv. 10, so also while he is infinitely merciful to all his children, his mercy is specially manifested to them who reverence and obey him, and peculiarly enjoyed by them. ¶ *From generation to generation.* That is, perpetually. God changes not. From the beginning of time, through all ages, his mercy is extended to his offspring, and enjoyed by them in a degree proportionate to their moral purity.

51, 52. This language is "the eastern manner of expressing that God was about to raise those who were in a low condition, and depress those who were in a high one."—*Pearce*. This commentator and some others suppose the expressions here used are to be understood prophetically, concerning the overthrow of Herod and other rulers, and the exaltation of those who had before been destitute of power. Others understand a general acknowledgment that God doeth all things, at all times, according to his own will. It was doubtless the effect of the gospel, to abase the proud and exalt the humble. Luke xviii. 14. Yet the construction of this passage seems to indicate rather what God had already done, than what his gospel should afterwards do. Perhaps the fact that he had passed by the proud and powerful, and had selected a meek and unpretending virgin to be the recipient of such a signal favor, prompted Mary to make this general acknowledgment of his supremacy. ¶ *He hath shewed strength with his arm.* Some have supposed that the exertion of different degrees of power are indicated by the arm of God, and his hand, and his finger. This distinction appears more fanciful than judicious; for

Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

his wonderful works are ascribed indifferently to his finger and his hand, and to his hand and his arm. Compare Exo. iii. 20, with viii. 19; and see Ps. xlv. 3; xcvi. 1. Either of these phrases is simply a figurative expression, to denote the divine power.

53. *He hath filled the hungry, &c.* The same general idea is here expressed, as in the foregoing verses; that God is able and has a right to bestow or withhold, as seemeth good in his own sight. He maketh glad the heart of the poor, by the supply of their daily wants; and he humbleth the arrogance of the rich, who are proud and who deny him, by causing their riches to vanish.

54, 55. The meaning of these verses is more perspicuously expressed in the translation by Campbell. "He supported Israel his servant, (as he promised to our fathers,) ever inclined to mercy towards Abraham and his race." ¶ *Holpen.* A word nearly if not entirely obsolete, meaning helped. The original denotes to hold by the hand, or to uphold. The idea is, that, amidst all dangers and perils, Israel or the Israelites had been guided, and protected, and preserved from material harm, by him who promised Abraham that his posterity should be blessed. Allusion is made to the promise of a Messiah. We may therefore understand Mary to mean that God had not only afforded help to Israel in time past, but was now about to fulfil his promise in its most important sense, by the birth and ministry of his well-beloved Son. This was the crowning mercy; and it seems to be included in this ascription of praise to God for the performance of his promise to Abraham. Gen. xvii. 6—8; xxii. 15—18. Compare Acts iii. 25, 26; Gal. iii. 16.

The striking similarity between this

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

poetical thanksgiving of Mary, and that of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1—10, has often been noticed by commentators. The similarity is natural; for both were occasioned by very similar circumstances. In both cases, an unexpected blessing had been promised; and the minds of the two females were almost necessarily led to the contemplation of that sovereign power which bestows blessings or administers rebukes, not always according to human probabilities, but according to his own will. In both cases, too, the birth of the son was regarded as a public blessing, and the mothers had occasion to acknowledge the divine mercy both to themselves and to their race. The similarity is therefore natural, even if there were no spiritual influence exerted on the minds of the speakers.

58. *Rejoiced with her.* They no longer considered her subject to reproach, ver. 25, but they rejoiced with her, though they might not have realized the full extent of the blessing.

59. *Eighth day.* That is, on the eighth day after the birth of the child. This was the period, prescribed in the law, for circumcision. Gen. xvii. 12. God commanded Abraham that this rite should be performed upon all his male posterity, when eight days old. But according to the Jewish manner of reckoning, the two phrases indicate the same thing; for the day of birth was counted for one day, though not more than an hour of it remained; and the day of circumcision was counted for one day, at whatever hour the child might be circumcised. Circumcision was therefore performed frequently before the child was fully seven days old, of twenty-four hours each; yet it was called eight days old, because both the day of birth and the day of circumcision were included in the reckoning. See note on Matt. xxvii. 64. ¶ *They called him,* &c. It was the custom of

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

the Jews to give names publicly to their children, at circumcision, as we do, at baptism or dedication. By what authority the priests called this child Zacharias, does not appear. They certainly were not directed to do so by either of the parents. See ver. 60, 63. Perhaps they took it for granted that the first-born son would be called by his father's name, since the custom was so very general. Their officiousness in giving this name without permission, and their interference with the wishes of the parents, ver. 61, might have been no more than was usual in that day, but would now be deemed highly indecorous and impertinent.

60. *He shall be called John.* Such was the direction of the angel, ver. 13. This, like most Jewish names, was significant, meaning grace of God, or gift of God, or mercy of God. Although the character of individuals is not to be determined from their names, generally speaking, yet in this case, as in ver. 31, the name prescribed was peculiarly applicable to the person. The mother was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, of which she had been informed by her husband, but earnestly insisted that her child should receive the name announced by the angel.

61. *There is none of thy kindred,* &c. This objection may not now appear to have much force, since names are so generally bestowed as a matter of fancy, without the slightest reference to kindred. But among the Jews, at the time here indicated, "names were selected from those of the progenitors of a family; hence in the New Testament, hardly any other than ancient names occur."—*John.* Under such circumstances, it doubtless occasioned surprise to hear a name proposed which had not belonged to any of the kindred.

62. The priests appealed to the father to decide the question. They might better have taken his opinion at the

63 And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

first. ¶ *Made signs.* Hence some have supposed that Zacharias was deprived of hearing as well as of speech. The word *eneneuon*, (*ἐνενευον*), here rendered *made signs*, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It indicates merely to make a silent inquiry or communication. A similar word occurs John xiii. 24 Acts xxiv. 10; in both cases rendered *beckoned*. But in neither case was the one party unable to speak, or the other to hear. A nod of the head or a glance of the eye is as truly a sign, a silent significant communication, as any other motion whatever. And, in the case under consideration, the priests probably turned their eyes upon Zacharias, as if they were waiting for his decision; and by this sign, without words, they indicated their desire that he should communicate a name. When the penalty of unbelief was imposed, the loss of hearing was not intimated, ver. 20; nor was its restoration mentioned, when the period of deprivation ended, ver. 64. If this had been a part of the penalty, we might reasonably expect some allusion to it; especially as the loss of speech was foretold in two forms, and its restoration declared in three forms of speech, at the least. Under such circumstances, the mere fact that others made signs to him does not justify the conclusion that he could not hear.

63. *He asked.* This request was doubtless made by signs; for, being speechless, he had no other means of communicating his desire. ¶ *Writing-table.* Rather, writing-tablets. Instead of paper, the ancients used tablets, or thin pieces of wood or metal, covered with wax, upon which they wrote with hard sharp-pointed instruments, called styles. Such a tablet was requested, here, and not the article of furniture now called a writing-table.

64. *His mouth was opened.* That is, his power of speech was restored. The first use he made of his long-dormant faculty was to utter the praise of God in presence of those who had assem-

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them*,

bled, and to magnify his great goodness. He acknowledged the justice of his past suffering, and offered thanks to God for deliverance, and for the exact performance of the divine promise.

65. *Fear came, &c.* The restoration of speech to Zacharias was so sudden, and so unexpected to his friends, that they felt an overpowering consciousness of the divine presence. It seems probable, that, while praising God, ver. 64, he had recounted many of the circumstances which occurred nine months previously; and that these circumstances, as well as those attending the circumcision, are included in *these sayings*, which were speedily and widely noised abroad, or made public. See ver. 66. If so, the whole scene through which he had passed, from the beginning to the end, was so clearly understood to be miraculous, that a religious awe was felt by all who witnessed a part and heard the remainder. They might well say, it is the hand of God; hallowed be his name.

66. *Laid them up in their hearts.* That is, they remembered and meditated upon the things they had heard. They did not reject or dismiss *these sayings* as an idle tale, but cherished a lively interest in them as indicative of marvellous events soon to follow. ¶ *What manner of child shall this be?* or, what shall be the character of this child? They had good reason to suppose that a child, whose birth, itself out of the common course of nature was attended with such miraculous events, would not be an ordinary personage; but that some great work should be performed by him. Possibly, some hoped he might be the promised Messiah. Certainly, his existence and future actions were regarded with a general and a deep interest. ¶ *And the hand of the Lord was with him.* A Jewish form of speech, meaning, he was sustained, protected, and blessed, by the divine power. Some understand this as the language of the people, indicating their belief that the child was

laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be ! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

evidently under the special protecting care of the Lord ; others, as the language of the evangelist, indicating that God continued to distinguish John, by evident tokens of his favor, subsequently to the events before narrated.

67. *Was filled with the Holy Ghost.* Strongly moved by the divine spirit, and guided by its influence. ¶ *Prophesied.* "Zacharias does not seem to have prophesied in the strict sense of the word ; for everything, which this speech of his contains, he was informed of by Gabriel, ver. 15—17, or he might have very easily concluded it from what the angel told him. Probably, too, he might have been informed by Mary of what Gabriel had said to her."—*Pearce.* The word prophet generally denotes one who is inspired to foretell future events ; but it sometimes means merely a religious teacher, as in Matt. vii. 15 ; x. 41. The word prophecy has a similar latitude of signification. Doubtless, its usual meaning is, to predict the future ; but sometimes it indicates no more than preaching or teaching the things previously performed or revealed. See Matt. vii. 22 ; Acts xix. 6. In this sense may the word be understood here. The poetical effusion of Zacharias, for this also is poetry, consists almost entirely of the language of the Old Testament and of the facts made known by the angel. I cannot perceive that he distinctly predicts a single event, which had not been before revealed. Nevertheless, as he is declared to have been filled with the Holy Ghost, we may safely believe he was under the special guidance of the spirit, in what he uttered ; and his language may be regarded as a divine communication of truth for the benefit of men. It should be remarked, however, that he seems, throughout, to have entertained the common Jewish opinion concerning the Messiah, whose speedy advent he evidently expected. The blessings of his reign seem to have been regarded as temporal, such as deliver-

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David :

70 As he spake by the mouth of

ance from political enemies and oppressors and the exaltation of the Jewish nation, rather than spiritual, such as purification from sin and the bestowment of immortal holiness.

68. *Visited.* God is said to visit his people, whenever he bestows on them any extraordinary favor, or executes upon them any signal punishment. Gen. i. 24 ; Ps. lxxx. 14 ; Exo. xxxii. 34 ; Jer. v. 29. In this case, the visitation is connected with blessings, and is therefore to be understood as an apparent as well as a real display of mercy. ¶ *Redeemed his people.* Some understand this to mean spiritual redemption or salvation. But from what follows, in ver. 71—75, I think it more probable that Zacharias referred to temporal or political deliverance ; the same kind of deliverance which the disciples intended, when they said, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Luke xxiv. 21. Such was the common expectation of the Jewish nation. To redeem is literally to repurchase that which has passed from our possession with or without our consent. Thus we redeem property which we have pledged to others for their security ; and thus also we redeem our friends who have been carried into captivity by enemies. Figuratively, deliverance from any kind of bondage, or from any evil, is expressed by this word. And in this figurative sense it is very frequently used in the scriptures. See Exo. vi. 6 ; xv. 13 ; Deut. vii. 8 ; Ps. ciii. 4 ; Jer. xv. 21 ; Hosea xiii. 14 ; Tit. ii. 14. In all these cases, God is said to redeem, when he manifestly only delivers. Such a deliverance, and apparently from temporal bondage, seems to have been the burden of Zacharias' thanksgiving, here.

69. *Horn of salvation.* Salvation is here to be understood, like redemption in the previous verse, with reference to the political deliverance from a yoke of bondage, which the Jews expected

his holy prophets, which have been since the world began :

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us ;

72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant ;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us,

the Messiah would accomplish. *Horn* was frequently used as an emblem of power. Ps. lxxv. 10 ; Jer. xlviii. 25 ; Dan. vii. 8 ; viii. 20 ; Zech. i. 19. The figure is taken from those beasts whose principal weapon of offence and defence is the horn. This phrase is equivalent to *strong deliverer*. ¶ *House of his servant David*. Family or posterity of David. It was the uniform expectation of the Jews that the Messiah should descend from David, and should establish his throne in greater power and dignity than had before been witnessed ; that he should break the yoke of all foreign oppressors, and give universal dominion to the chosen people.

70. *Since the world began*. Literally, from the age, *ap' aiōnos*, (ἀπ' αἰῶνος.) By this, some understand the whole period from the creation ; some, the Jewish age or dispensation ; and some, the period from the days of David. The reference may be safely understood to apply to all the prophets who had predicted the advent of the Messiah. Whatever the Holy Spirit may have intended in their predictions, they were clothed in such imagery as led the Jews to expect temporal splendor, and dignity, and power. Zacharias seems to have thus understood them ; though his words, as prompted by the spirit, may have a further and more important meaning. See note ver. 79.

71. *Saved from our enemies, &c.* A deliverance from foreign bondage, rather than from sin and from spiritual foes, is the most natural and obvious import of this language. Thus it was doubtless understood by the speaker, whatever may be its additional meaning.

72—75. The promise anciently made to Abraham, of mercy in store for his posterity, was about to be signally ful-

that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remis-

filled. Gen. xxii. 16—18. God had sworn by himself, and was about to fulfil his promise. That promise, afterwards explained by the apostles to embrace the most glorious spiritual blessings, was understood by the Jews to relate to temporal privileges and enjoyments. And in this sense it seems to have been understood by Zacharias, whose language has an obvious application to such temporal blessings. He speaks as a Jew ; and in common with his countrymen, rejoices in hope of a speedy deliverance from the oppressor, and liberty of conscience to worship God without fear.

76—79. In these verses, the mission of John is noticed, and the ministry of the Messiah is also alluded to, in terms familiar to Jewish ears.

76. *Prophet of the Highest*. Prophet of God ; or perhaps teacher of God's truth would express the idea, with sufficient accuracy. John is often denominated a prophet, though he did not profess to foretell the future, unless his announcing the speedy appearance of the Messiah and the baptism of the Holy Spirit be regarded in this light. His labor consisted almost exclusively in teaching men the way of truth, and exhorting them to walk in it. ¶ *Prepare his ways*. See note on Matt. iii. 3.

77. The language is still descriptive of what John should do. He should make known the fact that the promised Deliverer was at hand. He should direct the attention of the people to Jesus, giving them information that he was the true Messiah. He should teach the people how to secure blessings to themselves, by embracing Jesus as the Messiah, forsaking their sins and obeying his commandments. It is doubtful whether the Jewish people, or even



sion of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God ; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of

Zacharias himself, understood by salvation or remission of sins, anything more than deliverance from the temporal evils which they were then suffering. Temporal calamities they regarded as tokens of the divine displeasure ; and their removal, as an indication that their sins were forgiven. To us, the words have a more important signification, and they were perhaps designed by the spirit to convey the idea of a spiritual deliverance, and the forgiveness of sins, properly so called. See note on ver. 79.

78. *Tender mercy of our God.* The expected blessing is here ascribed, as all blessings should be, to the mercy of God. Existence, all temporal enjoyments, spiritual holiness, immortal happiness, all are the fruit of his mercy, and a manifestation of his love. ¶ *Day-spring from on high.* The original means, sometimes, the tender shoot or branch of a tree, and sometimes, the morning light, or the rising of the sun. It probably is used here figuratively, in the sense of morning light, to denote John, as the precursor of Jesus, who, by a similar figure is called the Sun of Righteousness. Mal. iv. 2. It is said to come from *on high*, to indicate that it comes from God, who is the Giver of every good gift and every perfect gift.

79. *Sit in darkness, &c.* See note on Matt. iv. 16. ¶ *To guide our feet into the way of peace.* The meaning is similar to ver. 77. "The way of transgressors is hard," Prov. xiii. 15 ; but of wisdom or virtue, it is testified, that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. iii. 17. To forsake sin and practise virtue is the only sure method to secure present peace. And final and everlasting peace presupposes an absolute deliverance from the dominion of sin, and the active exercise of the spirit of holiness. In accordance with this fact, we find John guiding the feet of his brethren into the way of peace, by exhorting them to repent, to forsake their sins, and to practise righteousness. Luke iii. 2—14.

On this whole song of praise, uttered by Zacharias, it should be remarked,

death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

that although he probably contemplated temporal blessings as the fruit of the Messiah's reign, and described those blessings in the common language of the day, yet we may believe the spirit which guided his utterance intended to predict other and richer blessings. Literally, or in the sense in which the Jews understood them, these predictions were not fulfilled in that generation, nor have they yet been fulfilled. The children of Israel have never since that day been free from subjection to a foreign yoke ; they have not received the temporal blessings which they expected from the Messiah. But, as we are able to perceive by the history of the events, and as our own experience may testify, the predictions have been fully verified, in their more important sense, by the spiritual blessings resulting from the ministry of our Lord. I have chosen to explain the language, in the notes, as I suppose it was understood by the Jews, at the time. The higher signification need not be illustrated in detail, as there will be occasion elsewhere to notice all the important subjects here shadowed forth.

80. *Waxed strong in spirit.* That is, became strong in understanding ; his spiritual energy was unfolded, and he was thus prepared to occupy the important post assigned him. *To wax* is an almost obsolete word, meaning to increase. It is now seldom used, except in poetry. ¶ *In the deserts.* That is, in the less cultivated region, or the hill-country of Judah. Ver. 39. Deserts, or the wilderness, as used in the scriptures, does not denote what is now usually understood by those terms. See note on Matt. iii. 1. ¶ *Till the day of his showing unto Israel.* Until the commencement of his public ministry, at the prescribed age of thirty years. In retirement and comparative obscurity, he meditated on the strange events connected with his birth, and prepared himself, and was prepared by the influence of the divine spirit, for the important and arduous duty allotted to him.

## CHAPTER II.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that

## CHAPTER II.

1. *In those days.* That is, about the time when the events occurred, which are narrated in this chapter and the foregoing. Or, more strictly, about the time when John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth were born. ¶ *Cesar Augustus.* The name of the Roman Emperor. He was nephew of Julius Cæsar, the first of that name, and whose successors, for many years, though not of his race, were called Cæsar, as the kings of Egypt were called Ptolemy. The first name of this Emperor was Caius Octavius. He was for a time associated with Antony and Lepidus in the government of Rome; but afterwards obtained supreme authority, when the surname Augustus was given him, in acknowledgment of his dignified rank; and subsequently, by decree of the senate, the month formerly called Sextilis was named August, in his honor. He died about fourteen years after the birth of Christ, at the age of seventy-five years; and so wisely and prosperously had he exercised his government, that after his death, altars were erected to him and he was worshipped as a god by his idolatrous countrymen. This emperor "had the honor to shut the temple of Janus, in token of universal peace, at the time when the Prince of Peace was born. This is remarkable, because that temple was shut but a very few times."—*Calmet*. ¶ *All the world, &c.* The word *oikoumenē*, (*οἰκουμένη*;) here rendered world, properly denotes the inhabited part of the earth; and the phrase *all the world* might therefore be taken in its widest signification. But it is often used in a more limited sense, and must be so understood here; for Augustus was not sovereign of the whole world, strictly speaking, and he had no right to tax or register for taxation those who were not subject to his authority. The phrase cannot reasonably be supposed to embrace more than the Roman empire, in which sense it was frequently used; and many commentators understand it to embrace so much here. But others, with apparently good reason, un-

derstand it in a still more limited signification, as including only the land of Palestine, as in Luke iv. 25; xxi. 26.

2 (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*)

This view of the case, and the reasons for adopting it, are plainly and briefly expressed, as follows:—"There has been much difficulty respecting this passage, from the fact that no such taxing of *all the world* is mentioned by ancient writers. It should have been rendered *the whole land*, that is, the whole land of Palestine. The *whole land* is mentioned to show that it was not Judea only, but that it included also Galilee, the place where Joseph and Mary dwelt. That the passage refers only to the land of Palestine, and not to the whole world, or to the whole Roman empire, is clear from the following considerations. (1.) The fact that no such taxing is mentioned as pertaining to any other country. (2.) The account of Luke is confined to this country only. (3.) The words world and whole world are not unfrequently used in this limited sense as confined to a single country."—*Barnes*. See also note on Matt. xxiv. 14. ¶ *Should be taxed.* The word *apographō* (*ἀπογράφω*;) signifies to enrol, or to register, rather than to tax. The translators probably used the word tax, because such registration or enrolment was generally made with reference to taxation. An exact rendering of the word, however, is preferable, as the passage is thus freed, in part, from the difficulty which attends its explanation. In itself, its meaning is sufficiently plain; but, taken in connexion with the following verse, there is an historical difficulty, not very easily obviated.

2. The difficulty attending the subject embraced in this verse is twofold: (1.) It does not appear from history that any general tax was levied, even on the Jews, at the particular time here indicated; and (2.) Cyrenius, or Quirinius as the Latins write the name, was not governor of Syria, until about a dozen years after the birth of our Lord. Various theories have been proposed, to obviate the difficulty. In regard to the first portion, some have supposed that the registration, (see note on ver. 1,) here called taxing, was not

**3** And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

**4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth,

made with reference to a tax, but only embraced the names and occupation of the people, that the population and strength of the province might be known; and that this was the reason why the Jews submitted so readily to this, while they were excited to open rebellion by a subsequent actual taxation, Acts v. 37. Others have supposed the registration was made preparatory to a tax, but that the tax itself was not levied for several years, when a second census was taken of persons and property. Thus Bishop Pearce: "We learn from Josephus, Antiq. B. xvi., ch. 9, § 3, that much about this time, the Roman Emperor Augustus was extremely angry with Herod, and signified to him by letter, that he had formerly treated him as a friend; but that for the future he would treat him as a subject. In consequence of this, it seems probable that he sent an order to enrol all the inhabitants of Herod's kingdom, as if he had intended to lay a tax upon them, and make his kingdom tributary, as Pompey had some years before made it; but the emperor's good nature suffered him to go no further than an enrolment, Herod having, after two embassies sent to him without effect, found out a method of pacifying him by a third; and therefore, though an enrolment was then made, yet no taxing then took place, till ten years afterwards, when the emperor had deposed Archelaus the son and successor of Herod." Such are two of the most reasonable theories upon this subject, which I have seen. This portion of the difficulty, however, as is observed by Robinson in his edition of Calmet, "can probably never be *fully* removed, because of the absence of the necessary historical data." The other portion of the difficulty is not so formidable. For whatever purpose the enrolment or registration was made, it is supposed to have been under the superintendence of Cyrenius, who was specially appointed to that service by the Roman emperor, or who possibly may have been at that time associated with Saturninus in the government of Syria. In either case, if Cyrenius had charge of the enrolment, it might properly be said by Luke to have been "the first

census of Cyrenius, governor of Syria," as Lardner and others translate the phrase. Cyrenius would thus be called governor by anticipation; or designated by the title, which, at the time this gospel was written, the Jews had become accustomed to associate with his name. See note on Mark ii. 26. Campbell suggests a different remedy for the difficulty, and sustains it with his usual ability. He translates the verse thus: "This first register took effect when Cyrenius was president of Syria." He quotes several examples to justify the expression *took effect* instead of *was made*. Matt. v. 18; vi. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 54. According to this theory, it is not necessary to suppose that Cyrenius made this first registration; but only that he used it, with the necessary corrections, in the apportionment of a subsequent tax. This verse has perplexed much wiser heads than mine; and I freely acknowledge my inability to affirm absolutely what is its true interpretation. I only remark, that it involves no article of religious faith or principle of morality. It affects merely the credibility of the historian. But as all the other historical facts mentioned by him are perfectly accordant with the testimony of other writers, and as none *contradict* him on the point under consideration, we need not hesitate to give full and entire credit to his narrative. ¶ *Syria*. This country, anciently "called *Aram*, from the patriarch who peopled its chief provinces, comprehended the country lying between the Euphrates east, the Mediterranean west, Cilicia north, and Phenicia, Judea, and Arabia Deserta, south."—*Calmet*. Antioch was the capital of the kingdom of Syria. After having been governed by its own kings for many centuries, with occasional periods of subjection to foreign powers, this country was conquered by Pompey, a few years before the birth of Jesus, and became a Roman province. Subsequently Judea was annexed to it, and the two remained under one government for several years.

**3. His own city.** The Jews were so much accustomed to be numbered in tribes and families, that they would naturally prefer to be thus registered, whether or not they were required by

into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that while they

law. Hence it appears that each resorted to his own city, or the place belonging to the head of his house, on this occasion.

4. *Galilee—Nazareth.* See notes on Matt. ii. 22, 23. ¶ *City of David.* So called, because David was born and brought up there. 1 Sam. xvi. ¶ *House and lineage.* A distinction is made between these terms, by interpreters; lineage, or family, being understood to embrace several houses; and houses, to signify figuratively individual households, or, more strictly, the children of one father. The general idea, however, intended to be conveyed here, is that Joseph was one of the posterity of David, and that for this reason he went to the city of David to be enrolled. His pedigree is inserted at length in Matt. i. 1—16.

5. *With Mary.* It is not to be supposed that Mary would encounter the fatigue of such a journey, at that time, unless required to do so for the purpose of enrolment. That she did do so has been regarded as strong presumptive evidence that she was a daughter of David. If Joseph "went to Bethlehem to be enrolled, because he was of the house and family of David, she must go thither for the same reason also; for otherwise, saith Grotius, she ought to have been enrolled in the city of her own family, and not at Bethlehem; for it is said, ver. 3, that all (men and women) went to be taxed, every one in his own city."—*Whitby.* Rosenmüller suggests that Mary must have been the heir of her father, in default of male heirs, for such only, he says, were entered on the public registers; and, as an heir, she could not marry out of her tribe or family; consequently she must have been of the house of David, as well as her husband. Numb. xxxvi. 8, 9. It may be doubted, however, whether the enrolment required by the emperor corresponded in all particulars with the registration customary among the Jews.

were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

7. *First-born son.* This phrase naturally, though not necessarily, implies that she afterwards had other sons. If the evangelist had designed to teach that Mary remained a virgin through life, he would probably have said that her son was born without adding the descriptive epithet *first-born*. On this subject, see notes on Matt. i. 25; xiii. 55. ¶ *Swaddling-clothes,* or swathing-bands. Such was the usual method of treatment. Among the Hebrews, immediately after the birth of a child, "it was washed in a bath, rubbed with salt, and wrapped in swaddling-clothes. Ezek. xvi. 4."—*Jahn.* And in the present day, it remains customary to wrap infants in swathing bands, or long, narrow pieces of cloth, to guard against distortion and other injuries to which the feeble frame is subject. ¶ *Manger.* This word occurs only in ver. 12, 16, and Luke xiii. 15, in the last instance rendered *stall*. Some prefer to translate the word *stable*; but, in my judgment, little is gained by such change of word. Manger, according to the common acceptance of the term, is the box or receptacle in which food is placed for horses or cattle. Its form and size would be suitable to serve as a safe place of deposit for an infant. The mother would not probably place it on the floor, exposed to be trampled by beasts; she would seek a place of safety; and what place would seem more safe than the manger, elevated above the floor, and enclosed entirely except the top. That Joseph and Mary, and probably many more were in the stable, or the place more particularly designed for the beasts, is very generally believed; and a sufficient reason is assigned; *there was no room for them in the inn.* In the East, the inns or caravansaries are of a very different character from what are now styled inns, or taverns, or hotels, in our own land. Neither food nor beds are ordinarily furnished in them; but these

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

articles are provided by the travellers themselves. "The furniture carried by the individuals of a caravan consisted of a mattress, a coverlet, a carpet for sitting upon, a round piece of leather which answered the purpose of a table, a few pots and kettles of copper covered with tin, also a tin-plated cup, which was suspended before the breast under the outer garment, and was used for drinking, 1 Sam. xxvi. 11, 12, 16; leathern bags for holding water, and provisions in quality and abundance as each one could afford.—In the cities, there are public inns, called *khans* and *caravansaries*, in which the caravans are lodged without expense. They are large, square buildings, in the centre of which is an area or open court.—The first mention of one in the Old Testament is in Jer. xli. 17. It was situated near the city of Bethlehem."—*Jahn*. At the time mentioned in the text, so many were gathered at Bethlehem to be registered, that it was necessary for a large number to occupy the caravansary. And even here, the portion designed for lodgings, which I suppose to be specially denoted by *the inn*, was so crowded, that some, and among them Joseph and Mary, were obliged to accommodate themselves as they might, in the portion usually allotted to the camels or other beasts of burden. In this humble place occurred that event, which was celebrated by the angelic hosts, and which has filled the human heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

8. *Same country*. That is, in the region round about Bethlehem. ¶ *Shepherds*. Men having custody of flocks of sheep, which abounded in Judea. See note on Matt. ix. 36. ¶ *Abiding in the field*. Sheep were ordinarily pastured in the uncultivated portions of the land, at a distance from towns and villages; and the shepherds remained with them by night as well as by day, to prevent them from straying, and to guard them from ravenous beasts. ¶ *Keeping watch, &c.* Literally, watching the watches of the night over their flock. The meaning is, they watched, probably by turns, through the night. Perhaps the peculiar phraseology may have reference to the division of the

night into watches. See note on Matt. xiv. 25. "It was customary to take their flocks out in the spring, about the month of March, into the deserts, or mountainous and uninhabited region, and pasture them there until the rainy season commenced, in October or November, and then drive them home. It would seem to have been during the summer pasturage, that the events in the text and context occurred. If so, our Lord was probably born between the months of March and November, rather than as late as the twenty-fifth of December.—The exact date we cannot now wrest from the remorseless grasp of oblivious antiquity. But we feel, that the twenty-fifth of December is as much embalmed in the associations and affections of the Christian world, and is therefore as cordially to be observed with Christmas festivities and solemnities, as if the precise natal hour were known to have been on that day."—*Livermore*. The particular day is of little consequence to us. We are accustomed to celebrate the fourth day of July, as the birth-day of our political liberty; but the selection of the day is arbitrary, altogether. The declaration of Independence was adopted on that day, to be sure; but the events by which the great question was determined, so far as the solemn resolutions of the people and their agents could determine it, had occurred previously, and on what particular day the *fact* of independence became certain, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to decide. Yet, being now disposed to rejoice in the fact, we do not hesitate to adopt the fourth day of July as the season for public manifestations of joy, although we cannot prove that the birth of political liberty occurred on that day, rather than on any other day in the year. So we may express publicly our gratitude to God for the gift of his dear Son, as well on the twenty-fifth day of December, as on any other day. And, surely, if we devote one day in the year to rejoicing in political liberty, we ought to dedicate one day to the expression of joy and gratitude for an infinitely richer blessing,—a blessing by which we are made free indeed. John viii. 36.

9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them ; and they were sore afraid.

9. *Angel of the Lord.* Perhaps the same angel who had previously visited Zacharias and Mary. This time he came not alone. Ver. 13. It well harmonizes with any rational conception we can form of the angelic character, to suppose they gladly executed the mission entrusted to them. If they rejoice at the conversion of each sinner, much more would they rejoice at the advent of Him who came to sanctify and save all sinners, and announce his birth with holy exultation. ¶ *Glory of the Lord.* Or, a divine glory. It is a common Hebrew idiom, to augment the import of any term by adding the name of God. Thus it is said, Acts vii. 20, that Moses was "exceeding fair;" literally, fair to God. Probably, an exceedingly glorious light shone around the shepherds. ¶ *Sore afraid.* Very much terrified. See note on Luke i. 12.

10. *Fear not.* See note on Luke i. 13. ¶ *I bring you good tidings of great joy.* The word *euangelizomai*, (εὐαγγελίζομαι,) here rendered *I bring you good tidings*, is translated *preach the gospel*, Luke iv. 18; xx. 1; Acts xvi. 10. The precise signification is expressed in the common translation. See also Luke viii. 1; Acts xiii. 32. From this word are derived *evangelize*, to announce good tidings; *evangelist*, one who announces good tidings; *evangelical*, whatever is truly good tidings. It is well known that these terms have been strangely perverted; but such is their true meaning; and such is the uniform signification of the original, in the scriptures. The gospel itself was anciently called *evangel*; and the words are identical in meaning, both signifying good news, or glad tidings. The message, thus particularly denominated here by the angel, is recorded in ver. 11. And well might this message be styled good news; the annunciation of Him who should save mankind from their sins, Matt. i. 21, redeem them from iniquity, Tit. ii. 14, gather them together in himself, Eph. i. 10, and make them one with himself and the Father, John xvii. 21. Such a message was worthy the angelic messenger by whom it was sent, and worthy the

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

all-gracious God who sent it. ¶ *Which shall be to all people.* The blessing was not limited in its nature, but designed for all; hence the annunciation of it would be good news, tidings of great joy, to all. It should be observed, that the *joy* is represented as becoming universal; for this it is, according to the construction of the original, which should be to all people, or, in other words, fill all hearts. Not only should the joyful tidings be communicated to all, but they should actually produce universal joy. Perhaps we should not err, by supposing *joy* to be used figuratively for the blessing which produces it. The import of the sentence, thus understood, would be, I evangelize to you a great blessing, which shall be to all people. I use the word *evangelize* for the want of a more common one, to answer to the verb in the original, rendered *bring good tidings*. But this point need not be insisted on. It is the most obvious meaning of the whole message, according to any reasonable construction of the terms, that a general rejoicing of mankind was embraced in it. Many understand the phrase *all people* in a limited sense, as denoting, not mankind universally, but very many. That the phrase is often used in this sense cannot be denied. But there are good reasons for believing, that, in this case, it should be understood in its most enlarged, comprehensive sense, as including every son and daughter of Adam. (1.) It is the general doctrine of the scriptures, that Jesus came into the world to save all men from sin. John iii. 17; xii. 32; Acts iii. 25, 26; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 2. (2.) The revealed character of God justifies the conclusion that the gift of a Saviour was designed for all. He is the father of all; he is merciful to all; he wills the salvation of all; and he is no respecter of persons. Acts xvii. 26; Ps. cxlv. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Acts x. 34. (3.) The known character of men justifies the same conclusion. If any were perfectly holy, not needing salvation from sin, we might suppose the blessing was not for them, and therefore not universal in extent. But all men are sin-

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto

ners ; there is none absolutely righteous, no, not one. All, therefore, need salvation from sin, which no one is able to purchase, but all must receive, if they do receive it, as a free gift from God. Rom. iii. 9—20; Eph. ii. 8, 9; 2 Tim. i. 9 Tit. iii. 5. It is idle to object, that God will not save some men because they are sinners. It was to save just such persons that Jesus was sent ; to save sinners, not the righteous ; to heal the sick, not the whole who need no physician. Matt. ix. 13; Luke v. 31, 32; 1 Tim. i. 15. And if he do not save them, he fails to do so because they are precisely such persons as he came to save. The sinfulness of men is the very circumstance which makes salvation necessary. To suppose that some shall not be saved *because* they are sinful, is to suppose they shall not be saved *because* they need salvation ; and, therefore, that their salvation is prevented by the very circumstance which induced God (so to speak) to send his Son to save them. Before we can reasonably admit this conclusion, we must be convinced either that Jesus was unqualified for the work which he undertook, or that he will be unfaithful in its performance. For if God gave him all power in heaven and earth, and he himself be faithful, he will execute his mission and will be literally the Saviour of all men.

11. *City of David.* That is, Bethlehem. See ver. 4, and note on Matt. ii. 1. ¶ *A Saviour.* See note on Matt. i. 21. ¶ *Christ.* The anointed. See note on Matt. i. 1. ¶ *The Lord.* See note on Luke i. 43. All these titles are frequently applied to Jesus in the scriptures ; he is called a Saviour, because he came to save mankind from sin ; Christ, (or Messiah, which has the same signification,) because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, as the prophet of God and the ruler of his people ; and Lord, because, for the purpose of reconciling men unto himself, God placed the whole human family under his dominion. 1 Cor. viii. 6; xv. 27 ; 2 Cor. v. 17—19 ; Heb. ii. 8.

12. *Sign unto you.* The distinguishing-

you ; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with

ing mark by which they should be able to identify the individual. Jesus was born under unusual circumstances ; and the humble and inconvenient arrangements, which his mother was obliged to make for his comfort, would readily distinguish this infant from any other who might be found in the same caravansary.

14. *Glory to God.* Praise be to God. The angels recognized God as the giver of every good gift and every perfect gift, and ascribed to him the glory of this crowning manifestation of his good will towards men. And if the angels of God, being witnesses of that act of grace, made the heavens resound with their acclamations, much more should we, who receive the blessing and believe ourselves to have become thereby heirs of a happy immortality, ascribe praises to him, love him with the whole heart, and glorify him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his. 1 Cor. vi. 20. ¶ *In the highest.* This phrase has been variously interpreted to mean, in the highest degree ; or, by the highest intelligences, that is, by angels ; or, in the highest places, in the heavens ; or, as the most high God. It is not very material, in which sense we understand it. The great leading idea is the same, in either case ; that our heavenly Father deserves the highest homage, and is worthy to be worshipped and glorified by all his creatures. ¶ *On earth peace.* This may indicate the relation between God and men, or between man and man, or the condition of single individuals, or all these. God is invariably at peace with men ; but the carnal mind is enmity against God. Rom. viii. 7. Jesus reconciles men to God, and thus makes the peace mutual. 2 Cor. v. 19 ; Rom. v. 1. The spirit of the gospel, which was promulgated by that Saviour whose birth was thus celebrated by angels, is a spirit of love,—supreme love to God, and fervent, unbounded love to man. Wherever this spirit is cultivated, and it is cultivated in exact proportion to the measure of salvation attained, men will live in peace with each other. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor ;

the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing

which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law and the bond of peace. Rom. xiii. 10; Eph. iv. 3. The influence of this spirit of love also makes man at peace with himself; just so far as he loves God and worships him, and loves his fellow-men and does unto them as he would have them do unto him, just so far he has the testimony of a good conscience towards God and towards men, and enjoys peace. Gal. v. 22; Prov. iii. 17; Isa. xxxii. 17. ¶ *Good will toward men.* The gift of a Saviour was the highest possible evidence of the divine favor. The love of God is displayed in making such abundant provision for our temporal wants, and in bestowing upon us our distinguishing powers and faculties. But, above all, is his exceeding grace manifested by sending his Son to reclaim us from our wanderings, to save us from our sins, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, to purify us unto himself, to reconcile us unto God, and to prepare us for the perpetual enjoyment of our Father and his kingdom. Herein was *good will* most gloriously displayed. John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9—11.

15. *Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, &c.* The distance was probably not great, as the field in which they kept their flock was in the "same country," or in the vicinity of the city. Ver. 8. They made no unnecessary delay in seeking to find the Messiah. They *hasted* to see that which had been revealed.

16. On repairing to the city, they found the holy family in the condition which the angel described; the babe lying in a manger, affectionately guarded by his mother and her husband. This was evidently regarded by the shepherds as sufficient confirmation of what they had heard; and they seem

to have entertained no doubt that the whole message was true, and that the child thus found was truly the long-expected Messiah. The apostle reasoned in the same manner concerning the divine purposes. Having demonstration of a part, he confidently trusted in the remainder. See Heb. ii. 8, 9. In like manner may we trust that this Messiah will fully accomplish all which was testified concerning him by men and angels, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; for we have positive evidence that he commenced the work and laid down his life. So much he has done; and we have no occasion to doubt that he will carry on the work to perfection, when all shall bow the knee in humble and willing subjection to him; and then he will surrender his delegated power, and become subject to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

17. *They made known abroad, &c.* The circumstances of our Lord's birth were made publicly known, at a time when it would have been easy to contradict and disprove the alleged facts, if they had not been true. They were not for the first time divulged, when this gospel was written. It would have been impossible to convince the Jews that such strange events were matters of notoriety in their childhood, if, in fact, they had never heard of them before, and could find no tradition of them among the elders. The evangelist manifests no apprehension that the facts would be disputed; but, by dealing so freely in names and dates, and asserting that the facts were announced so long before, gives the most convincing evidence of his own honesty and the integrity of his narrative.

18. The story of the shepherds occasioned much wonder among the people. They were expecting the advent of the



were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of

Messiah; yet they supposed he would suddenly appear in great glory; they did not expect his approach in such humble form; hence, perhaps, their wonder and perplexity.

19. *Mary kept all these things, and pondered, &c.* She probably believed her son was the Messiah; but entertained the common Jewish opinion concerning his character. Yet some facts had been announced to her by the angel and communicated by the shepherds which indicated a more exalted character. She was not able to comprehend the full measure of divine grace thus revealed. But she cherished a vivid remembrance of all the circumstances, and *pondered*, or weighed, or carefully meditated upon them, earnestly desiring to know their true and actual import.

20. The shepherds not only proclaimed in Bethlehem what they had seen and heard, ver. 17, but returned to their place of abode, and there also made known the glad tidings.

21. *When eight days were accomplished, &c.* See note on Luke i. 59. *¶ Called Jesus.* See note on Matt. i. 21.

22. *Days of her purification.* By the Jewish law, the mother was accounted *impure* or *unclean*, and prohibited from entering into the sanctuary or engaging in public religious services, for the space of forty days after the birth of a male infant, and eighty days after the birth of a female. See Lev. xii. 1—5. *¶ To Jerusalem.* The principal religious services of the Jews were required to be performed in the temple at Jerusalem. *¶ Present him to the Lord.* In memory of their preservation when the first born of the Egyptians were destroyed, the Jews were required to set apart and sanctify to the Lord's ser-

vice all their first born, both man and beast; the first born children to be employed in religious services, and the first born of animals to be offered in sacrifice. Subsequently, the descendants of Levi were taken for priests, and the first born of other tribes were to be redeemed, or exempted from this special service, by the payment of a specified sum of money. See Exo. xiii. 2, 12; Numb. iii. 12, 13, 40, 41; viii. 15—18; xviii. 15, 16. "God having acquired a peculiar right to the first born of Israel, by preserving them amidst the destruction brought on the first born of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by this little acknowledgment of five shekels, which was the price that every first born child must be redeemed at."—*Doddridge*. Consequently, every such son was publicly presented in the temple, as consecrated to God, and then redeemed, according to the law. Yet, though Jesus was thus exempted from service as an ordinary priest, he became a high-priest of a more noble and glorious order. See Heb. ch. viii.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice ac-

vice all their first born, both man and beast; the first born children to be employed in religious services, and the first born of animals to be offered in sacrifice. Subsequently, the descendants of Levi were taken for priests, and the first born of other tribes were to be redeemed, or exempted from this special service, by the payment of a specified sum of money. See Exo. xiii. 2, 12; Numb. iii. 12, 13, 40, 41; viii. 15—18; xviii. 15, 16. "God having acquired a peculiar right to the first born of Israel, by preserving them amidst the destruction brought on the first born of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by this little acknowledgment of five shekels, which was the price that every first born child must be redeemed at."—*Doddridge*. Consequently, every such son was publicly presented in the temple, as consecrated to God, and then redeemed, according to the law. Yet, though Jesus was thus exempted from service as an ordinary priest, he became a high-priest of a more noble and glorious order. See Heb. ch. viii.

23. *As it is written, &c.* See Exod. xiii. 2. *¶ Holy to the Lord.* That is, devoted to his service, or consecrated as a priest. See note on ver. 22.

24. *To offer a sacrifice.* In the law concerning purification, a lamb was required as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove as a sin-offering; but if the parents were poor, and unable to furnish these, two pigeons or two turtle-doves were accepted, one for the burnt-offering, and the other for the sin-offering. Lev. xii. 6—8. These last were brought by Joseph and Mary; and thus is their humble condition in life indicated. If our Lord submitted to

cording to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should

baptism in order to fulfil all righteousness, or all the sacred ordinances, (see note on Matt. iii. 15,) it was surely proper that the express provisions of the law, in his case, should be fulfilled by his parents. He needed not these purifying ceremonies; for he was pure and undefiled. But his followers are admonished by his example to yield obedience to all divine statutes. Moreover, if these sacrifices had not been offered, Mary would have remained excluded from the temple and the congregation of worshippers, as legally unclean, even as Jesus himself could not have obtained audience of the Jews, without circumcision, but would have been regarded as unclean.

25. *Simeon*. Various conjectures have been made concerning this person; but it is generally allowed that nothing *certain* is known of him, except what is here recorded. He was, it would seem, a religious man, one who served God in sincerity, and who hoped in his mercy, and confided in his promise. ¶ *Waiting for*. Rather, expecting, or ready to receive. The same word occurs, Luke xv. 2, rendered *receiveth*; Acts xxiv. 15, *allow*, that is, expect or hope for, as the connexion evidently shows; Tit. ii. 13, *looking for*. The reason why he so confidently expected the blessing is given in ver. 26. ¶ *Consolation of Israel*. The Jews were accustomed to speak of the Messiah, or perhaps rather of the blessing the nation should receive through him, in this manner. Lightfoot quotes several examples, in which the phrase was used as a solemn asseveration; for example: "So let me see the consolation, I saw one pursuing another with a drawn sword." That is, let me forfeit the blessings of the Messiah's reign, if I did not see one pursuing another with a drawn sword.

not see death, before he had *seer* the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according

This consolation, or the coming of the Messiah, by whom it should be communicated, Simeon expected to see; for it had been promised.

26. *Revealed to him*. Revelations are not necessarily from God; for one man may reveal to another what was before hidden or secret. But in this case, we must understand that Simeon had his information from heaven; because none on earth was able to give it. Whether this revelation was made in a dream, or by the ministry of an angel, or by a direct impression on the mind, or in a still different manner, we are not informed. The fact only is asserted and this is all which we need to know. ¶ *See death*. A form of speech usual among the Hebrews. To see death, or to taste of death, means simply to die. ¶ *The Lord's Christ*. Rather, the Lord's anointed; that is, the Messiah. The Hebrew Messiah and the Greek Christ both mean anointed. Jesus was thus called, with reference to his offices of ruler and priest, as it was customary to consecrate such by anointing with oil. Exo. xxviii. 41; 1 Kings i. 34. From the language of Simeon, which follows, it would seem that he had been more fully instructed than the Jews generally, concerning the true character of the Messiah; and he rejoiced with fulness of joy.

27. *By the Spirit*. Under the influence of the spirit; prompted by the spirit. ¶ *To do for him according to the custom of the law*. That is, to present him before the Lord, and to offer the sacrifices prescribed in the law. See notes on ver. 22—24.

28. *Blessed God*.—Returned thanks to God for his mercy; acknowledged that God was the author of this as of all blessings.

29. *Now lettest thou thy servant de*

to thy word :

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ;

*part in peace.* Or, more briefly, now I can die in peace. Simeon had no doubt or anxiety left, to disturb his peace of mind. He had long expected the advent of the Messiah, through whom he believed mankind should receive the richest blessings. He had been assured that he should see the Messiah with his own eyes. The hour had come, and the promise was fulfilled. By a divine impulse, he recognized the helpless infant Jesus, as the prophet and priest of God, and the Saviour of the world. The day had dawned ; the sun of righteousness was appearing ; and Simeon had no doubt that its beams should illumine and warm all hearts. He had nothing more to desire ; and he could now die in peace. ¶ *According to thy word.* "Thy promise made by revelation. God never disappoints. To many it might have appeared improbable, when such a promise was made to an old man, that it should be fulfilled. But God fulfils all his word ; keeps all his promises ; and never disappoints those who trust in him."—*Barnes.*

30, 31. *Thy salvation, which thou hast prepared.* Campbell translates the phrase thus : "The Saviour, whom thou hast provided." In justification of this change, he says that, "in every language, we sometimes meet with such tropes as the abstract for the concrete, the cause for the effect, and the like. In the Oriental tongues, however, they seem to be more common than in most others. Thus, God is called our defence, our song, our hope ; that is, our defender, the subject of our song, the object of our hope. But when, in any occurrence, the words literally translated appear but ill adapted to the idiom of our tongue, or occasion obscurity, it is better to express the sense in plain words." ¶ *Before the face of all people.* As the Saviour's birth should be productive of joy to all people, ver. 10, so he is to be exhibited to all as a Saviour, as *their* Saviour. He came not for the benefit of a single nation, or single people ; but to bless all by saving them from their sins.

22. *A light to lighten the Gentiles.*

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Sin and ignorance are often called darkness in the scriptures ; and to enlighten men is a common figure to express instruction, especially that moral instruction which produces reformation. Thus the ancient prophets predicted that Jesus should save the Gentiles, or instruct and purify them, in similar terms. Isa. xlix. 6 ; Mal. iv. 2. When Jesus was born, the whole Gentile world was enveloped in moral darkness ; or, in scriptural phrase, they sat "in darkness and in the shadow of death." Luke i. 79 ; see also Matt. iv. 16. He came to enlighten them, by imparting to them a knowledge of God and his righteousness, by purifying their hearts from evil, in short, by making them both to know and to obey the divine law. In like manner he enlightens other sinners. As natural darkness is dispelled by the rays of the sun, so moral darkness is dissipated by the sun of righteousness. The Jews had a vague idea that the Gentiles should receive some benefit from the Messiah ; but they by no means comprehended the glorious truth, that God is equally the God of Gentiles and Jews, Rom. iii. 29, as is evident from their indignation when the apostles called their attention to the fact, Acts xiii. 46—50 ; xxii. 21, 22. But Simeon had a more enlarged view of the case. He understood, by revelation, that the Gentiles were to be enlightened, sanctified, and saved, as well as the Jews. ¶ *Glory of thy people Israel.* It was to the everlasting honor and glory of the Jews among men, that one of their daughters should give birth to the Saviour, Rom. ix. 4, 5, notwithstanding that generation covered themselves with infamy by rejecting him when he appeared on earth. But a still higher glory awaits that people. Though they generally rejected the blessing, when it was first offered, yet God has secured it to them by promise ; his faithfulness will not fail ; and all Israel shall be saved. Rom. xi. 25—36. The chosen people are not forever rejected ; but in God's own time, they and the Gentiles shall rejoice together in the great salvation.

33. We have here additional evidence

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel ; and for a sign which shall be

that neither Joseph nor Mary fully understood the character of Jesus or of the work he came to perform. When they heard the language of Simeon, descriptive of future glory, they were filled with wonder.

34. *For the fall and rising again, &c.* It is a common description of Jesus, in the scriptures, that he should be a rock of offence, or a stumbling-stone. The apostle refers to this fact, Rom. ix. 32, 33, and illustrates it at length in Rom. ch. xi. The character of Jesus was altogether different from their expectations. They expected the Messiah would be a mighty temporal prince ; he came in all humility and lowliness ; born of poor parents, living many years in seclusion, making no pompous display as he passed through the land, his whole retinue the common people, and his chosen associates a few poor fishermen. They expected the Messiah would liberate them from Roman bondage, and exalt their nation to the pinnacle of glory ; he counselled them to be obedient to their rulers, and expressly declared that his kingdom was not of this world. They expected the Messiah would show especial regard to those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others ; he reproved them faithfully for their hypocritical pretences of sanctity, and assured them that even publicans and harlots should enter the kingdom, before them. They expected the Messiah would bestow particular blessings on the disciples of Moses, to the exclusion of the heathen world ; he declared himself commissioned to save *the world*, and testified that men were to be regarded according to their moral character, without respect to forms of religion, or kindred by blood. Hence the Jews stumbled at that stumbling-stone ; and most grievous was their fall. They endured calamities without a parallel. Yet we have assurance they shall rise again. God had a merciful purpose to be accomplished. He did not allow them to stumble, that they should utterly perish ; but he will cause them to rise again, and to unite with all

spoken against ;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also ; ) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

created intelligences in bowing the knee to Jesus, and confessing him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11. "And so all Israel shall be saved ;" Rom. xi. 26 ; for out of Zion comes the Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. ¶ *Sign which shall be spoken against.* The whole history of our Lord's ministry is a verification of this truth. He was despised, persecuted, mocked, insulted, crucified. The most opprobrious terms were applied to him ; Nazarene, Galilean, an associate of sinners, a wine-bibber and gluttonous, possessed of a devil,—such were some of the contemptuous epithets bestowed on him by those for whom he labored, and for whom he died. But he returned not railing for railing, nor cursing for cursing ; he manifested the most kind feelings towards them while he lived, wept in contemplation of their approaching calamity, and died with a prayer for their forgiveness on his lips. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He will not utterly forsake them. He will secure their final holiness and happiness, and thus be the glory of his people Israel.

35. *A sword shall pierce, &c.* A figurative expression, denoting that Mary would suffer the keenest anguish on account of her Son ; perhaps with special reference to the scene at the cross. The persecutions and afflictions which he endured, however, previous to the closing tragedy, must have been painful to his mother ; for a mother most deeply sympathizes in the sufferings of her offspring. The same figure occurs, 1 Tim. vi. 10. ¶ *Thoughts of many hearts, &c.* "That is, that it may be known who are good, and who are bad ; men disposed to receive the gospel, and who are otherwise. See 1 Cor. xi. 19."—*Pearce*. These words are to be understood in connexion with the preceding verse, the former clause of this verse being parenthetical. By the light of gospel truth, manifested by Jesus, it would readily be discovered who actually loved truth and godliness, and who openly scorned or hypocritically pretended to love it.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the tem-

36. *Anna, a prophetess.* She may have been the widow of a prophet or religious teacher; or she may have foretold future events. But perhaps no more is intended by this epithet, than that she sometimes gave a public testimony to the truth, as in ver. 38, thus instructing others. See 1 Cor. xiv. 3. ¶ *Aser.* The same as the Hebrew, Asher. "The inheritance of his tribe lay in a very fruitful country, on the sea coast, with Libanus north, Carmel and the tribe of Issachar south, and Zebulon and Naphtali east. Tyre and Sidon, with the whole of Phœnicia, were assigned as the territory of this tribe, (Josh. xix. 24—31,) but it never possessed the whole range of district assigned to it, Judg. i. 31."—*Culmet.* This territory was the northwesterly section of Canaan, and bordered on the Mediterranean. ¶ *Seven years from her virginity.* In other words, she had lived with a husband, or in a married condition, seven years, and subsequently had been a widow, even until she had become very old.

37. *A widow of about fourscore and four years.* This may possibly denote that she had lived in a state of widowhood eighty-four years, in which case her age would considerably exceed a century; but the more common and probably the more correct opinion is, that she was now eighty-four years old. ¶ *Which departed not from the temple.* "It may be doubted, whether any women ever discharged any office in the temple; some think they did.—It is apparent, that women were wont to come from other parts to the tabernacle for devotion's sake, not to perform any ministry. So this Anna, by birth of the tribe of Aser, had changed her native soil, and fixed her abode at Jerusalem, partly for devotion, that she might be the more at leisure for praying in the temple, and partly as a prophetess, that

ple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the law

she might utter her prophecies in the great metropolis."—*Lightfoot.* Her great age might have excused her constant attendance; but her zeal and piety induced her to be uniformly present, *night and day*, that is, at both the evening and morning sacrifices, and to observe all the prescribed fasts.

38. *At that instant.* While Simeon was speaking, ver. 29—35. ¶ *Spake of him.* Either of Jesus, as the Messiah, or, as the construction of the sentence seems rather to denote, of God, to whom she *gave thanks* for sending the Messiah. ¶ *Redemption.* The same kind of redemption is here intended as in Luke xxiv. 21; a redemption or deliverance from political bondage and temporal evils which then oppressed the nation. For such a redemption, very many, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, were earnestly looking, and they expected it would be accomplished by the Messiah. There is no evidence that the nation expected any other redemption under his reign. As Jesus did not accomplish this, but labored only to effect a spiritual redemption, which they did not expect at his hands, they rejected him, and would not have him to reign over them.

39. *They returned into Galilee, &c.* Luke omits the flight into Egypt, recorded Matt. ii. 13—15. But he does not deny that Jesus was carried thither by his parents. He says they returned into Galilee, and so they did; but he does not affirm that they returned immediately. A similar case is recorded in the history of Paul. In Acts ix. 22—26, we are informed that he returned to Jerusalem, after his conversion; nothing is said of his labors in any other place than Damascus, until he returned; but in Gal. i. 17, 18, we learn that, after his conversion, he went into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus, whence, after three years, and not before, he

of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

went to Jerusalem to confer with Peter. Here is an interval of at least three years passed over by Luke; and we may reasonably suppose him to have done the same in the text. Joseph and Mary returned to Bethlehem, after presenting Jesus in the temple; fled to Egypt; remained there a short time, until after the death of Herod, who sought to destroy the child's life; and then returned to their own city, Nazareth. Some suppose they returned directly to Nazareth, and fled from that place to Egypt; and that Matthew describes their second return. But the former interpretation seems preferable.

40. Jesus was "found in fashion as a man," having taken the form of man, not of angels; Phil. ii. 8; Heb. ii. 16. Hence, being "made like unto his brethren," he increased in stature and wisdom from youth to manhood; his spirit was strengthened or rendered firm and energetic by the trials he endured; he was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin;" and, at the close of his ministry, "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15; Phil. ii. 8. ¶ *The grace of God was upon him.* Campbell renders this phrase, "adorned with a divine gracefulness," as indicating that mingled majesty and kindness of manner, which produced such a powerful effect on those whom he addressed, filling believers with affection and confidence, and unbelievers with awe. This effect is often noticed in the scriptures. "Never man spake like this man." John vii. 46. There was a divine gracefulness in his manner, and an energy in his language, evidently more than human. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Acts x. 38; Col. ii. 9. This gave him his extraordinary power

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a

over men, while on the earth, and qualified him effectually to accomplish the great work assigned him,—the redemption of the world from sin.

41. *Went to Jerusalem every year, &c.* By the Jewish law, all the males were required to attend the feast of the passover in Jerusalem, every year. There were three feasts, thus celebrated every year, at which a general attendance was required: the passover, or feast of unleavened bread; the feast of weeks, or of the first fruits of the harvest, sometimes called Pentecost; and the feast of tabernacles, or of the ingathering of the harvest. Exo. xxiii. 14—17. Joseph and Mary seem to have been blameless, touching the law. Phil. iii. 6.

42. *Twelve years old, &c.* At this age, the Jews caused their sons to learn the trade or occupation, designed for them. And it has been supposed, that, at this age, the sons were required to attend the feasts with their parents, and become partakers of the prescribed religious duties. Exo. xxxiv. 23. Jesus promptly yielded obedience to the law; and, indeed, on this occasion, commenced his "Father's business," ver. 49.

43. *Fulfilled the days.* That is, the eight days of the passover, for so long that feast continued; the first and eighth were the principal of those days, being distinguished by peculiar religious ceremonies. Exo. xii. 16; Deut. xvi. 1—8.

44. *In the company, &c.* In the East, it was customary to travel in large companies or caravans. See note on ver. 7. Whole neighborhoods would travel together to the feasts. The children would naturally associate with each other, and would not be so constantly under the eye of their several parents as if a single family were journeying. Thus, though Jesus remained at Jerusalem, when the caravan left, "Joseph

day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were

and his mother knew not of it," ver. 43, reasonably supposing he was with the other children belonging to their company. They probably saw him, when preparing to depart, and felt assured of his safety. But at the close of the first day's journey, they sought him among *their kinsfolk and acquaintance*, and not finding him, became aware that he was left behind.

45. *Seeking him.* Probably, on their way to Jerusalem, as well as in the city itself; for they knew not whether he was left there, or was lost on the journey.

46. *After three days.* That is, on the third day. See note on Luke i. 59. One day had been spent on their journey from Jerusalem; one, on their return; and on the third, they found him whom they sought. ¶ *In the temple.* Not in the holy place, but in one of the courts of the temple. See note on Matt. xxi. 12. *Sitting in the midst of the doctors.* That is, sitting among the Jewish teachers of religion, often styled *doctors*, or learned men. Sitting was the usual posture of teachers. Luke iv. 20. They stood while reading the scriptures, but sat down to teach or expound. ¶ *Asking them questions.* Probably respectful questions concerning the law and the prophets. The questions were also discriminating, and evinced uncommon power and maturity of mind in a child of twelve years, as is manifest from ver. 47. There is no evidence that, on this occasion, Jesus endeavored to perplex the teachers, or to make them condemn themselves, as he afterwards did, when they rejected him, and attempted to entrap him in conversation.

47. *Astonished at his understanding, &c.* His answers were so appropriate,

astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

and his questions so significant and important, that the hearers were astonished at the wisdom of one so young. They knew not then that he was under the special guidance of that spirit which imparteth all truth.

43. *Amazed.* Their astonishment was occasioned by finding Jesus in such a place and so employed. ¶ *Why hast thou thus dealt with us?* Why hast thou left our company, and given us all this anxiety concerning thy safety, and this trouble and perplexity in finding thee? ¶ *Thy father.* Joseph was the legal though not the natural father of Jesus. As the mystery of his birth was not generally known, it was natural that Mary should speak thus, in presence of the priests, lest she should be regarded as a sinner. That was not the time nor the place to enter upon a full explanation of all the facts connected with the birth of "the only begotten Son of God." John iii. 18.

49. *How is it, &c.* Various interpretations have been given of this question; but the following seems quite as judicious as any other:—"Why have ye sought me with so much anxiety? Mary should have known that the Son of God was safe; that his heavenly Father would take care of him, and that he could do nothing amiss."—*Barnes.* She had the best possible reason for believing her Son was destined by his Father to perform a great work; she had no reason to believe he had yet accomplished it; she should therefore have trusted in God to protect him. Yet, notwithstanding this, her anxiety was perfectly natural, perhaps unavoidable. ¶ *Wist.* Knew. ¶ *About my Father's business.* Some understand rather, *in my Father's house*, that is, the temple. In either case, the leading

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

idea is the same; my father sent me to "bear witness to the truth," John xviii. 37; and it is proper that I should be diligent in the work whenever and wherever an opportunity offers.

50. *Understood not, &c.* They supposed him to be the Messiah; but regarding the Messiah as a temporal prince, according to the common opinion of the Jews, they could not understand how his present employment in the temple was any part of the business entrusted to him. It may seem strange to us, that the communications made to Joseph and Mary should not have enabled them to appreciate the character of Jesus more justly; but it is no more strange, than that his own personal instructions produced no more visible effect on the minds of his disciples. Even until after his resurrection, they looked for political redemption, and could not elevate their minds to the steady contemplation of that more glorious deliverance which he would accomplish. Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6. If we duly consider this fact, we shall cease to wonder that the mother of our Lord, and her husband, did not at once attain a distinct conception of his character, and that they did not understand his language, which, to us, since the more full manifestation of the truth, appears plain.

51. *Went down.* The Jews uniformly speak of going up to and down from Jerusalem, with whatever other portion of the land it is compared. The city stood on elevated ground, but not actually higher than some other portions of Judea. But it was regarded as the "city of the great king;" for there stood the temple where His presence was specially manifested. It had, therefore, in the mind of all Jews, a moral elevation or dignity exceeding all other places. ¶ *Subject unto them.* Our Lord gave many examples to men, that they should walk in his steps. He also gave to children this example of obedience to parents. Though the God of

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

### CHAPTER III.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cesar, Pon-

heaven was his father, and he himself was appointed "heir of all things;" yet he loved his mother and obeyed her authority, while he was young; he respected her husband also, as his legal guardian, and was subject to him; and, as many believe, wrought with him in his labors as a carpenter. By obedience and diligence, he manifested a filial affection worthy the imitation of every child. And when he became a man, even when almost entirely overwhelmed with the burden of his great work, he did not forget or despise his mother; but made provision for her welfare after he should be taken away. John xix. 26, 27. ¶ *His mother kept, &c.* See note on ver. 19. Although she understood not the full import of what she had heard and seen, she treasured up all these circumstances, as matters of deep interest.

52. *And Jesus increased in wisdom, &c.* See note on ver. 40. ¶ *And in favour with God and man.* The meaning of this verse is perhaps sufficiently expressed in the following paraphrase: "And Jesus advanced considerably in wisdom, as well as in age and stature, and grew proportionably in favor both with God and men; his behavior being not only remarkably religious, but so benevolent and obliging, as to gain the friendship and affection of all that were about him."—*Doddridge*. Or, perhaps, we may understand, that as his mental powers were more fully developed, the power of the divine spirit was more strikingly manifested, the favor of God was more distinctly visible and apparently increased; and his character, as a whole, secured to him the respect and friendship of all who knew him.

### CHAPTER III.

1. *Fifteenth year.* That is, reckoned from the time when he was associated with Augustus in the government of the empire; but the *thirteenth* of his sole authority. ¶ *Tiberius Cesar.* See note on Luke ii. 1. He was the



tius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins;

step-son and successor of Augustus, with whom he reigned two years. He was a cruel and sanguinary prince. After a reign of about twenty-five years, in all, he closed his unhappy career by appointing the infamous Caligula his successor. He died, A. D. 37. ¶ *Pontius Pilate*. Appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius. See note on Matt. xxvii. 2. ¶ *Herod being tetrarch*, &c. See notes on Matt. ii. 19, 22; xiv. 1. This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. ¶ *Philip*. Another son of Herod the Great, whose wife Herod Antipas married, and for rebuking whose incestuous conduct John was subsequently beheaded. ¶ *Iturea*. A province of Syria, lying south of Trachonitis, east of Batanea or Bashan, on the east of the Jordan, and northeasterly from Jerusalem. Some apply this name to a large tract of country extending northeasterly from the Sea of Galilee, which they suppose to have formed a part of its south-western border. ¶ *Trachonitis*. "Rocky or rugged; a province between Palestine and Syria, having Arabia Deserta east, Batanea west, Iturea south, and the country of Damascus north."—*Calmet*. ¶ *Lysanias*. Little is known of him. He is supposed to have been a son or grandson of that Lysanias mentioned by Diodorus, whom Mark Antony destroyed, and gave part of his kingdom to Cleopatra. ¶ *Abilene*. A country, lying near Damascus, on the northwest; so called from the city Abila.

The particularity with which Luke fixes the date of the events he records, furnishes strong evidence in favor of his narrative. No sane person, disposed to forge a history, would intentionally furnish the means of detection. Fabulous

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude

histories are generally deficient, or very obscure in names and dates. Luke multiplies both, as if he would court the severest scrutiny, and thus makes full proof of his honesty.

2. *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests*. There could not be more than one acting high priest, at the same time, according to the Jewish law. Various interpretations have been given of the phrase here used. None appear more reasonable than that which is briefly mentioned in the note on Matt. xxvi. 57: namely, that Annas had been high priest, and continued to be called by that title after his son-in-law was appointed to that office. He seems to have still possessed a degree of civil or ecclesiastical power, either by virtue of his former office, or by express appointment; for our Lord, when apprehended by his enemies, was presented to Annas for examination before he was sent to Caiaphas. John xviii. 13–24. However this be, Luke is not alone in mentioning two high priests as contemporary; for Josephus, the accredited historian of the Jews, frequently does the same. J. War, B. ii., ch. 12, § 6; B. iv., ch. 3, § 9, &c. ¶ *The word of God came unto John*, &c. He was moved by a divine impulse. He felt that he was required to deliver a message from God to men, and to commence the public duties of the ministry to which he was appointed.

3–9. See notes on Matt. iii. 1–6.

5. *Every valley*, &c. This is merely an amplification of the idea expressed in ver. 4, and Matt. iii. 3.

6. *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*. The blessing to be communicated by the Messiah, whose advent is here announced, was to be universal in extent.

that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

All flesh should see it; or, all men should partake its benefit. See Isa. xl. 1—5, from which this phrase is taken. God hath promised to give all men to his Son, Ps. ii. 8; John iii. 35; and the Son will save all, John vi. 37—40; xii. 32.

10. *What shall we do then?* John had admonished them to repent, that is, to forsake the love and practice of sin, to reform their lives, and to bring forth the proper fruits of reformation. They very naturally inquired *how* they should obey, asking him for more definite instructions. These particulars, omitted by Matthew and Mark, are here recorded, ver. 10—14.

11. The special duty here mentioned, is charity, or the imparting from our abundance to relieve the wants of others. But we are rather to regard the great principle on which this duty is founded; namely, a spirit of universal love and benevolence. This is a cardinal principle of Christianity. To love mankind fervently and sincerely, is the second great commandment; and to do to others as we would that others should do to us, is the legitimate effect of such love. Hence he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law; for this duty embraces all the rest,—provided always that this love be not only a matter of feeling, but a principle of action. Matt. vii. 12; xxii. 39, 40; Rom. xiii. 8—10; James ii. 15, 16; 1 John iii. 17, 18. By a common figure of speech, a part is here put for the whole; and by a single instance, we are admonished that the proper fruit of repentance, or work of

10 And the people asked him saying, What shall we do then?

11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto

reformation, is to renounce selfishness and all hatred or indifference towards our brethren, and to cultivate and manifest by our actions a spirit of love towards all men as our brethren, the children of our heavenly Father.

12. *Publicans.* See note on Matt. v. 46. The Jews seem to have partaken largely of that deep-rooted and inveterate hatred of taxation which is so common manifested by men; inasmuch that they openly rebelled against the government resisting by force the collection of a tax Acts v. 37. The publicans, or tax-gatherers, were therefore objects of utter detestation among the Jews, and were reckoned with the vilest of sinners. Their business itself was doubtless lawful and honorable, though disagreeable and sometimes difficult of execution. But it has been supposed, and with apparently good reason, that, in John's day, many of the publicans were dishonest, and, under pretence of collecting taxes, unlawfully took property from others and converted it to their own use. This practice, as it would seem, is reprehended in the succeeding verse.

13. *Exact no more, &c.* That is, do not require any man to pay more than the sum which is legally assessed upon him.

14. *Soldiers.* It is not certainly known whether these were Jews or Gentiles. There were, at this period, Roman troops stationed in Judea; and some of the Jews had also become soldiers. As the Jews would be much more likely than Gentiles to listen to John and submit to his baptism, it is

them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat

into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descend

probable that the soldiers here mentioned were Jews. ¶ *Do violence, &c.* This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament, and is found only once in the LXX., where it is rendered *to shake*. Job iv. 14. Literally, the language of John would prohibit what is generally regarded as the great duty of soldiers,—fighting. It is generally interpreted, however, to forbid a practice of extorting money by threats of personal violence, said to have been common among soldiers in ancient times. I can see no material difference, in principle, between extorting money or goods from individuals, by threats or the exercise of violence, and making similar extortions from nations, by like threats or by force of arms. Defensive war may be justified, on the ground that we are under obligation to preserve the blessings and protect the persons committed to our custody by our Father. But offensive war cannot be thus justified. And I think the text may with propriety be understood to condemn the use of violence in extorting anything, not only from individuals, but from nations. It has often been said, in strong language, but with much truth, that offensive war is simply robbery and murder on a large scale. It is certainly condemned by the spirit of the gospel, whether or not John be supposed to refer to the subject here. ¶ *Neither accuse any falsely.* It is said to have been a practice of soldiers, to denounce innocent persons as guilty of treason or other crimes; and to extort money in the form of bribes to refrain

from such accusations. The whole practice is utterly condemned. ¶ *Be content with your wages.* That is, with the pay and provisions prescribed by the law. Seek not to obtain more than is justly your due, by plundering others, or using any unlawful method whatever.

15. *In expectation, &c.* There was a general expectation at that time among the Jews, and to some extent among the Gentiles, that an extraordinary person, whom the Jews called the Messiah, was about to appear. When the people heard the message of John, so different from the language which they were accustomed to hear from their religious teachers, they suspected that he might be the individual whom they were looking for, and *mused in their hearts*, or seriously considered the subject.

16—18. See notes on Matt. iii. 11, 12.

19, 20. See notes on Matt. xiv. 1—12. This account of the imprisonment of John is not here placed in the order of time, but is inserted by Luke as indicating the manner in which his ministry was closed, and to complete the history of his life. ¶ *Philip's wife.* Griesbach, Knapp, and others omit the word *Philip* here; but they retain it in Matt. xiv. 3; and there can be no question that the same person is intended in both cases. ¶ *Added yet this above all, &c.* It need not be understood that this was Herod's greatest crime; for it was equalled if not exceeded by others committed by this unprincipled ruler. The meaning is simply that he added yet another

ed in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son of Heli*,

24 Which was *the son of Mattatlat*, which was *the son of Levi*, which was *the son of Melchi*, which was *the son of Janna*, which was *the son of Joseph*,

25 Which was *the son of Mattathias*, which was *the son of Amos*, which was *the son of Naum*, which was *the son of Esli*, which was *the son of Nagge*,

26 Which was *the son of Maath*, which was *the son of Mattathias*, which was *the son of Semei*, which was *the son of Joseph*, which was *the son of Juda*,

27 Which was *the son of Joana*, which was *the son of Rhesa*, which was *the son of Zorobabel*, which was *the son of Salathiel*, which was *the son of Neri*,

28 Which was *the son of Melchi*, which was *the son of Addi*, which was *the son of Cosam*, which was *the son of Elmodam*, which was *the son of Er*,

29 Which was *the son of Jose*, which was *the son of Eliezer*, which

was *the son of Jorim*, which was *the son of Matthat*, which was *the son of Levi*,

30 Which was *the son of Simeon*, which was *the son of Juda*, which was *the son of Joseph*, which was *the son of Jonan*, which was *the son of Eliakim*,

31 Which was *the son of Melea*, which was *the son of Menan*, which was *the son of Mattatha*, which was *the son of Nathan*, which was *the son of David*,

32 Which was *the son of Jesse*, which was *the son of Obed*, which was *the son of Booz*, which was *the son of Salmon*, which was *the son of Naasson*,

33 Which was *the son of Aminadab*, which was *the son of Aram*, which was *the son of Esrom*, which was *the son of Phares*, which was *the son of Juda*,

34 Which was *the son of Jacob*, which was *the son of Isaac*, which was *the son of Abraham*, which was *the son of Thara*, which was *the son of Nachor*,

35 Which was *the son of Saruch*, which was *the son of Ragau*, which was *the son of Phalec*, which was *the son of Heber*, which was *the son of Sala*,

36 Which was *the son of Cainan*, which was *the son of Arphaxad*, which was *the son of Sem*, which

crime to the long and black catalogue of his iniquities.

21, 22. See notes on Matt. iii. 13—17.

23. *Began to be about thirty years of age.* Either was about thirty years old, or was entering upon his thirtieth year. This was the age at which the Jews were admitted to the priesthood. We need not suppose that Jesus was bound by the same rule, as his priesthood was of a different order. But the Jews might have been unwilling to listen to his public instructions had he commenced at an earlier period; and he never excited their prejudices unneces-

sarily. This may have been one reason why both he and John commenced preaching at the age of thirty years. ¶ *Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph.* This implies, of course, that he was not the actual son of Joseph, but only so reputed among men, and perhaps *legally* so regarded, being registered, very probably, as the son of Joseph and Mary. ¶ *Which was the son of Heli.* Joseph is called the son of Heli, in the opinion of very many commentators, not because he was his actual son, but because he married the daughter of Heli, or Eli, and thus became his *legal* son, or son-in-law. Hence the

was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him,

All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence.

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 ¶ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up:

genealogy, which follows, is supposed to be that of Mary, not of Joseph.

24—33. On the subject of this genealogy, its difference from that given by Matthew, the most proper method of reconciling the two, and the genuineness and authenticity of both, see notes on Matt. i. 2—16.

## CHAPTER IV.

1—13. See notes on Matt. iv. 1—11.

14. Into Galilee. See note on Matt. iv. 12. Between the temptation and this return into Galilee, several events are recorded by John which are omitted by the other evangelists. ¶ A fame.

A report; his reputation was widely extended.

15. He entered upon the duties of his ministry, and was glorified, or praised and honored, by all who heard him. The first serious opposition he encountered from men is recorded in the succeeding verses.

16. Where he had been brought up. It is probable that Jesus dwelt at Nazareth with Joseph and Mary, from his birth until he went to Jordan to be baptized by John. In this place, he was well known, as an individual; but none except his own kindred seem to have suspected that he was a chosen servant

and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto

of God for the accomplishment of a mighty work. Indeed, none probably believed that such was his character, except his mother and her husband; for it is expressly stated that his *brethren* did not believe in him, John vii. 5. ¶ *As his custom was, &c.* He was punctual in his attendance on the public exercises of religion. He did not go to the synagogue to be instructed; for he was more wise, and understood infinitely more of the true kingdom of God, than any of the teachers. But he went to worship God, in the house devoted to his service. He went to unite with his brethren in offering thanks to God for his great goodness. He went, that others might have the benefit of his example. It were well if all would imitate it. The apostle exhorted Christians not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, a fault of which some, even then, were guilty. Heb. x. 25. There are those who forsake the public assembly, because they think they have become more wise than their teachers. Suppose they have; our Lord was more wise even than they; but he did not forsake the house of God. When men cease to need blessings, and have no occasion to ask; when they cease to receive blessings, and have no occasion for thankfulness; when they cease to have an interest in God's grace, and have no occasion to meditate on its richness and fulness; when they cease to have a common brotherhood with men, and are no longer under obligation to encourage the hearts of their brethren in well-doing, to strengthen the weak, to confirm the doubting, to caution the straying, to rejoice with the happy, and to mingle tears with the sorrowful; then, perhaps, they may be justified in forsaking the public assembly *because they have no more to learn*; but until then, it will be good and profitable for them to devote a portion of their time to the public worship of God, that they may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. iii. 18. Nor is a mere difference of opinion, on some doctrines, a sufficient reason for utterly forsaking public worship. It is more pleasant to wor-

him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

ship with fellow-believers. But if these cannot be found within a convenient distance, it is better to unite with any professed disciples of Christ, in religious worship, than to abstain altogether. The spirit of religious devotion is not exclusively confined to any one sect. And wherever it exists, we may find union of feeling, if not agreement in opinion,—provided our own hearts be right before God. Thus Jesus worshipped with the Jews, though he knew their opinions were wrong, and even that there was much corruption in their hearts. He knew they cherished some devotion towards God, and he united with them in ascriptions of praise. ¶ *Synagogue.* See note on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Stood up for to read.* In the Jewish assemblies, it was customary to stand, while reading the scriptures, but to sit, while addressing the people in the way of instruction or exhortation. Hence it was that our Lord's discourses were delivered in a sitting posture. But when he was about to read the allotted portion of the holy word in the synagogue, according to the usual custom he stood up. The reading of the scriptures in public was not always by the priests, but under their direction. It was also permitted to those who were not priests to address the people, as Jesus did on this occasion. See Acts xiii. 15. Paul and Barnabas being present in the synagogue at Antioch, "after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on;" which invitation Paul accepted.

17. *The book of the prophet Esaias.* That is, the roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. Books of the present form were not anciently used. Parchment and vellum, made of the skins of beasts, were among the materials used for writing. These were sometimes cut in narrow pieces, united, and rolled upon two wooden rollers. In order to read any portion of what was thus written, the parchment was rolled from one roller to the other, until the desired place was found. Hence comes our English word

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the

volume, from the Latin *volumen*, a thing rolled up. ¶ *Opened the book.* Rather unrolled the volume. ¶ *Found the place,* &c. Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. Probably the appointed lesson for the day; though this is not certain. The portion which Jesus read he declared had reference to himself and his ministry. It has been supposed to refer, in the first instance, to a temporal blessing near at hand when the prophet wrote. But the testimony of Jesus is sufficient to fix its principal and most important meaning.

13. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me.* As God appointed his Son to perform a special work, fully qualified him therefor by all necessary gifts and graces, and continually afforded him his presence and assistance, the Son might well be said to be filled with the divine spirit, or to have that spirit upon him. ¶ *Anointed.* See note on Matt. i. 1. As Jesus was consecrated both priest and king by the divine anointing, he was called Messiah and Christ, both which names signify, in the original languages, *anointed*. In this place, the reference is especially to his consecration as a priest, or religious teacher: *he hath anointed or consecrated me to preach,* &c. The great object of his ministry, the leading truth he was to preach, is set forth in what follows. ¶ *To preach the gospel to the poor.* See note on Matt. xi. 5. "The gospel means good news; the good news of salvation. By the poor are meant all those who are destitute of the comforts of this life, and who, therefore, may be more readily disposed to seek treasures in heaven; all those who are sensible of their sins, or are poor in spirit, Matt. v. 3; and all the miserable and afflicted, Isa. lviii. 7. Our Saviour gave it as one proof that he was the Messiah, or was from God, that he preached to the poor. Mat. xi. 5. — It is also one proof that the gospel is true. If it had been of men, it would have sought the rich and mighty. But it pours contempt on all human greatness, and seeks, like God, to do good to those whom the world overlooks or despises."—*Burnes.* ¶ *To heal the broken-hearted.* Either, those whose spirits are crushed by the calamities and

broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

afflictions to which mortality is subject; or, those who are borne down by a sense of their own sinfulness and imperfection, and filled with sorrow for their transgressions. ¶ *Deliverance to the captives.* A literal deliverance from captivity is often accomplished by the operation of that benevolent spirit which the gospel requires. But deliverance from spiritual bondage is probably intended here. No chains are more strong, and none eat more deeply into the flesh, than those of sin. The sacred writers frequently use this figure, to denote the miserable and helpless condition of sinners. Rom. vii. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 26. See also Rom. vi. 12—16. And a spiritual renovation, or a change from sinfulness to holiness, is described as a liberation from bondage. John viii. 32—36; Rom. vi. 18—22. ¶ *Recovering of sight to the blind.* In a literal sense, our Lord gave sight to the blind, in several instances. But the reference here is undoubtedly to that spiritual illumination which is denoted in the prediction, that he should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, that he should give light to those who sat in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death. It is one of the most common figures in the scriptures, to represent sin as darkness, and holiness as light; sinners as blind, and those who are purified from sin as able to see. Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 9. The commission to Paul has a striking resemblance to the passage under consideration. Jesus sends him to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 18. ¶ *To set at liberty them that are bruised.* This is similar to the deliverance of the captives before mentioned; but it embraces also an additional idea. It more distinctly refers to the misery produced by sin, and gives assurance of deliverance from it. Men are bruised and crushed by sin; its effects are exceedingly painful. They sometimes feel that their punishment is greater than they can bear. Gen. iv. 13; Prov. vii. 26;

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the syna-

gogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words

xviii. 14; Isa. i. 6; Rom. ii. 8, 9; vi. 21. From this state of misery, the consequence of sin, men are to be delivered, as well as from sin itself. When the captives come out from the prison house, and the fetters of sin are broken, their wounds and bruises shall also be healed. To deliver men from sin, but make them to suffer eternally for their former sins, or to remit the penalty of former sins, but leave them under the power of sin to repeat their transgressions, and inflict upon themselves new wounds and bruises,—either of these would be a trivial blessing, compared with that entire deliverance from the power of sin, and that entire healing of all the hurts it has inflicted, which are here promised together.

19. *The acceptable year of the Lord.* This phrase is supposed to refer to the year of jubilee, when, by divine appointment, the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded throughout the land, and liberty was proclaimed to the inhabitants; then all estates which had been pledged returned to their owners, and those who had been sold into bondage became free. It was indeed a day of general restitution and restoration, a day of redemption and temporal salvation. See Lev. ch. xxv. By this figure, our Lord teaches that God will grant a like spiritual deliverance from the power of sin, from its servitude, from its miseries, and will reinstate men in purity and happiness which sin had defaced, and to a great extent destroyed. The time had now come when the trumpet of the gospel was to be sounded, proclaiming a spiritual jubilee to mankind. The kingdom of God was now to be manifested; its principles were to become operative; and by their influence the whole creation was to be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. viii. 21. The year or time had come, and the Saviour, the mighty and strong deliverer, had come. The mystery hid from former ages was revealed, and all flesh should now see the salvation of God.

20. *Closed the book.* Or rolled it up.

¶ *The minister.* See note on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Were fastened, &c.* They regarded him attentively. This word is often used by Luke, and twice by Paul. It uniformly denotes a peculiar earnestness in the beholder. See Luke xxii. 56; Acts iii. 4, 12; vii. 55; 2 Cor. iii. 7, 13. There was something unusual in the attention with which the men in the synagogue regarded Jesus. It could not have been the language of the prophet which thus excited them; for this they had doubtless heard read in the synagogue frequently. Either the fame which they had heard of Jesus, as a prophet mighty in word and in deed, ver. 22, or that "divine gracefulness," with which he was endowed, enabling him to speak as never man spake and to produce an effect without parallel on the minds of his hearers, was probably the reason why they thus attentively and anxiously regarded him, expecting and desiring he would address them. And it may be supposed he read the prophecy in such a manner as led them to perceive it had some more sublime meaning than they had discovered, and excited a strong desire that he should explain and apply it.

21. *He began to say unto them.* It is evident that Luke records only the substance of our Lord's address. The theme of his discourse was the fulfilment of the prophecy he had read, showing its true meaning, and its application to spiritual blessings which he came to preach and to bestow. ¶ *This scripture.* That is, the portion just read from the prophet, ver. 18, 19. ¶ *Is fulfilled.* The time has come, even the acceptable year of the Lord. The deliverance darkly predicted is now openly announced, and the Deliverer is here, engaged in his glorious work. We may properly suppose, that our Lord proceeded to unfold the divine plan which embraced the deliverance of all men from the power of sin, and their translation into the kingdom of righteousness. Col. i. 13.



which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

22. *All bare him witness.* This phrase is variously interpreted. Hammond paraphrases it thus:—"And all that heard him did with acclamations express that they were amazed at the power and wisdom with which he spake," &c. Bishop Pearce, on the other hand, says, "Their wonder seems to have been not the effect of approbation, but of dislike; and, if so, they could only bear him witness by marking his words with a view to give them in evidence against him." There can be no question that the word *martureō*, (*μαρτυρῶ*), is often used to indicate a favorable testimony. See Acts vi. 3; x. 22; xvi. 2. And such I should feel confident was its meaning here, were it not so manifest from what follows that the men in the synagogue did not believe in Jesus or in the truth of his testimony. Perhaps the word may have the same sense here as in Matt. xxiii. 31; in which case, the meaning would be, all were witnesses; they heard him distinctly, and were surprised at the character of his message. ¶ *Wondered at the gracious words,* &c. Literally, at the words of grace. "The words of grace or favor; the kind, affectionate and tender exposition of the words, and explanation of the design of his coming, and the nature of the plan of redemption. It was so different from the harsh and unfeeling mode of the Pharisees; so different from all their expectations respecting the Messiah, who, they expected, would be a prince and a bloody conqueror; that they were filled with astonishment and awe."—*Barnes.* Truly, this discourse was different from the harsh mode of the Pharisees; it was also different from the harsh mode of many others who have professed to speak in God's name. It was a gospel message, a message of joy, a message of grace, announcing the love of God, and his intention to bless men. Two facts are especially observable. (1.) The prophecy and its interpretation were full of grace, because blessings and only blessings are named. The gospel, or good news, is proclaimed to the poor; broken hearts are to be healed, not sound hearts broken; captives are to be delivered, not the free brought into

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: what

bondage; the blind are to receive sight, not the lamp of reason to be extinguished; the bruised are to be healed, not the happy pierced through with many sorrows; in short, the proclamation of the gospel is to impart happiness, not grief. (2.) The promises of good are not limited in extent. There is no intimation that only a part of the afflicted shall be relieved; but the expressions are all general, and their most obvious import is, that all who have need of divine assistance have an equal interest in the promise. Such a message was truly full of grace. It differed much from what had passed for truth, and from what has more recently passed for gospel. It occasioned surprise *then*, as it has often produced the same effect, at other times. It was regarded as too good to be true; even too good to be satisfactory to those who had been taught from childhood that God loved the children of Israel, and would bless them to the exclusion of the Gentiles. It has always been regarded as too good to be true, by those who believe God is partial in the distribution of his richest spiritual gifts, and that he will bestow salvation on a part of his children and withhold it from the remainder. ¶ *Is not this Joseph's son?* See note on Matt. xiii. 55. One cause of their wonder was the fact, that a man, whom they had known from his youth, and who had enjoyed no visible advantages for acquiring wisdom, should have become such a powerful speaker, and should undertake to interpret the sublime language of the prophet.

23. *Physician, heal thyself.* A common proverb among the Jews. If one should attempt to heal another, when he himself had the same disease, it would be natural to say, heal thyself first, that we may have evidence of thy skill. So, if one rebuked sin in another, when guilty of the same, it might be said, heal thyself, that is, reform thy own conduct, first, that we may have evidence of thy sincerity. The application of the proverb here is not literal but figurative; give the same evidence here which you are reported to have given elsewhere, that we may judge whether your pretensions to the Mes-

soever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land :

siahship are well founded. In his answer is found the reason why he would not comply with their demand. ¶ *Done in Capernaum.* See note on Matt. iv. 13. It would seem that Jesus had already visited Capernaum, and performed mighty works there. Pearce supposes the order of time is not observed here, and that the visit to Capernaum, mentioned ver. 31, was previous to this scene at Nazareth. But others, and with apparently better reason, suppose that the miracles were wrought at Capernaum at the time referred to by John, ii. 12, during a visit which is not particularly noticed by the other evangelists.

21. *No prophet is accepted, &c.* That is, acknowledged to be a prophet, and known as such. See note on Matt. xiii. 57.

25—27. Jesus illustrates two facts in this passage: (1.) That prophets are not ordinarily honored in their own country; and (2.) that those, who thus foolishly and inconsiderately dishonor true prophets, cannot reasonably demand the performance of miracles; and, indeed, that there would be an impropriety in yielding to such a demand. See note on Matt. xiii. 58.

25. *Elias. Elijah.* ¶ *Three years and six months.* See 1 Kings xvii. 1; xviii.

1. It seems that the rain fell after an interval of three years from the time when it was expected. The rains in Judea fall in the autumn and spring, called the former and the latter rain. To the three years during which rain was expected but fell not, should be added the six months which elapsed before it was expected; the whole period will correspond with that here mentioned. ¶ *Great famine.* A natural consequence of such long continued

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him

drought, during which the ground would necessarily become parched and unfruitful. See 1 Kings xviii. 2.

26. The event here referred to is recorded at length, 1 Kings xvii. 8—24. ¶ *Sarepta.* Hebrew Zarephath. This was a city of the Sidonians, on the Mediterranean Sea, situated between Tyre and Sidon. The meaning of this verse is better expressed by Campbell: "yet to none of them was Elijah sent, but to a widow in Sarepta of Sidonia." That is, though there were many widows in Israel, at that time, Elijah was not sent to them, but was directed to visit a widow in a Gentile city.

27. *Lepers.* See note on Matt. viii. 2. ¶ *Eliseus. Elisha.* ¶ *Naaman the Syrian.* For an account of this person and his miraculous cure, see 2 Kings, ch. v. The disease of which he was thus healed was one of the most loathsome and fatal which ever afflicted men.

28. *Filled with wrath.* Three circumstances especially enraged them. (1.) By comparing his own conduct with that of Elijah and Elisha, two very eminent prophets, or, at the least, by citing their example in justification of himself, Jesus was understood to claim that he was a prophet; and his townsmen were filled with envy and wrath, that one whom they had so long known in humble life should at once profess to be so much superior to them. (2.) By the examples he quoted, they understood him to decline a compliance with their demand of miraculous proof that his claim was well founded. This they regarded as a slight, if not in fact an evidence that he was an impostor. (3.) By the same examples, it was strongly intimated that the Jews had no exclusive title to the blessings of the Mes-

out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, (whereon their city was built,) that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way,

siah's reign; but that as the prophets of old were sent to the Gentiles, so the Messiah would give them a share in his kingdom, and a portion of his rich gifts. This was the most mortifying and aggravating circumstance. They could endure almost anything rather than an idea that the Gentiles were equally interested with them in the divine favor and blessings. It was one of the principal causes of opposition to Jesus and his apostles, that they represented the Gentiles as heirs of salvation. Though they could endure to be rebuked for their own sins, their indignation almost always burst over all restraint, when the salvation of the Gentiles was mentioned. Thus, on this occasion, they were filled with wrath against Jesus, and attempted to destroy his life by violence. Thus, also, violent outbursts of indignation against the apostles are recorded, Acts xiii. 46—50; xxii. 21—23.

29. *Brow of the hill.* Dr. Jowett, who visited Nazareth, did not find any precipice in the immediate borders of the city, answering the description in the text. But at the distance of about two miles is a spot which he describes thus: "At this spot, on the right hand of the ravine, is shown the rock to which the men of Nazareth are supposed to have conducted our Lord, for the purpose of throwing him down. With the New Testament in our hands, we endeavored to examine the probabilities of the spot; and I confess there is nothing in it which excites a scruple of incredulity in my mind. The rock here is perpendicular for about fifty feet, down which space it would be easy to hurl a person who should be unawares brought to the summit; and his perishing would be a very certain consequence. That the spot might be at a considerable distance from the city, is an idea not inconsistent with St. Luke's account; for the expression, thrusting Jesus out of the city, and leading him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, gives fair scope for imagining, that, in

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath-days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

their rage and debate, the Nazarenes might, without originally intending his murder, press upon him for a considerable distance after they had quitted the synagogue." One of the Eastern modes of punishment was to precipitate the criminal from a great height, that he might be killed by the fall. In the present case, no legal process was attempted; but a tumultuous mob assumed to execute vengeance upon their own responsibility. Similar scenes have disgraced all ages, not excepting our own.

30. *Passing through the midst, &c.* Probably overcoming even their passionate rage by the dignity and majesty of his look, or by the power of his word, as in John xviii. 6. There is no intimation that he rendered himself invisible, as some have supposed. And it cannot be supposed that he resisted by force, and thus escaped; for this would be utterly inconsistent with his uniform character and conduct.

The remarks of Milman, as quoted by Livermore, are worthy of consideration. "The history of this transaction is singularly true to human nature. Where Jesus was unknown, the awe-struck imagination of the people, excited by the fame of his wonderful works, beheld him already arrayed in the sanctity of a prophetic, if not of a divine, mission. But the inhabitants of Nazareth had to struggle with old impressions, and to exalt their former familiarity into a feeling of deference or veneration. In Nazareth he had been seen from his childhood, and though gentle, blameless, popular, nothing had occurred, up to the period of his manhood, to place him so much above the ordinary level of mankind. His father's humble station and employment had, if we may so speak, still further undignified the person of Jesus to the mind of his fellow-townsmen. In Nazareth Jesus was still the 'carpenter's son.' We think, likewise, that we discover in the language of the Nazarenes something of local jealousy against the more favored son of Capernaum."

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and he cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now, when the sun was

setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he, rebuking *them*, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed, and went into a desert place; and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

## CHAPTER V.

AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And he entered into one of the

31—44. See notes on Mark i. 21—39.

## CHAPTER V.

1. *Pressed upon him.* The people gathered in such numbers, and the mass became so dense, that it was inconvenient to address them, while standing on the shore. His fame as a prophet mighty in word and deed was widely extended, and the people manifested the utmost anxiety to hear him. ¶ *Lake of Gennesaret.* The same as the Sea of Galilee. See note on Matt. iv. 18.

2. *Two ships.* The ships used on this lake were probably small fishing boats or vessels. Those here mentioned were evidently small, as the two

came near sinking under the weight of a single draught of fishes, ver. 7. ¶ *The fishermen were gone out of them.* They had been unsuccessful in their usual employment, ver. 5, and had discontinued it until a more favorable opportunity. But with commendable prudence and forecast, instead of wasting their time in idleness, they were making preparation to pursue their business to the best advantage, by *washing their nets*, or, *mending their nets*, as we read in Mark i. 19, that they might be in readiness at any moment. Hence there was no need for delay, when Jesus requested them to resume their labor, ver. 4.

3. *Which was Simon's.* Simon **Pe**

ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now, when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

ter's. ¶ *Prayed him.* Requested him. ¶ *Thrust out a little, &c.* The vessel or boat was probably drawn up partly upon the beach, for security. Jesus desired that it might be removed a small distance from the shore, that he might be relieved from the pressure of the crowd, but might still be so near the multitude that they might hear him distinctly. ¶ *Sat down.* See note on Luke iv. 16.

4. *Left speaking.* Concluded his discourse. The evangelist has not recorded what was said on this occasion. But we may safely suppose that Jesus taught the people the great truths of the kingdom of God; for this was the uniform theme of his public discourses. ¶ *Launch out.* The word *launch* now generally denotes the first movement of a vessel into the water from the spot where it has been constructed. But here it means *to go out*; that is, to go further from the shore. ¶ *Into the deep.* Into deeper water, where it was usual to take fish. Some have supposed that Jesus required Peter to go where the water was very deep, beyond the place where fish are ordinarily found; and that the draught was miraculous, not only from the quantity taken, but from the place where the nets were cast. I doubt the propriety of this exposition, (1.) because the word *bathos*, (βάθος,) here used, does not necessarily denote a depth of more than a few inches; Matt. xiii. 5; Mark iv. 5; its meaning seems to be simply *depth*, without distinctly indicating any particular degree; in the places quoted, it means a depth of earth sufficient for the proper vegetation and nourishment of grain; in the text it means a depth of water suitable to the kind of fish to be taken; and (2.) because, when Peter remonstrated against the attempt, on the ground that they had already toiled for a long time unsuccessfully, he gives no intimation that the place indicated was not good fishing-

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5 And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto *their*

ground; and Peter was not a man who would hesitate in pointing out such an obvious objection, if it really existed. It may be added, that it is not consistent with that *economy of miracle*, so observable in all cases, to suppose the draught of fish was made where fish were not ordinarily found. The quantity taken was sufficient to make the miracle manifest; and nothing more was necessary. ¶ *Draught.* The drawing of a net is called a draught; and the same word is sometimes applied to the fish taken. Thus it is said, so many were taken at one draught; or so many are one draught.

5. *Master.* The word *epistatēs* (ἐπιστάτης) is used six times by Luke, and by him only; the other evangelists use the word *Rabbi*, which Luke never employs. It means a prefect, or one set or placed before, or in a prior place or rank; hence it is used to denote a ruler, governor, or master; it is also used to denote a teacher, that is, a guide or director of the mind. ¶ *At thy word.* Peter was doubtless satisfied, from the discourse to which he had listened, that Jesus was no ordinary man. He spake as one having authority. There must have been something remarkable in his appearance, or in what he said, to produce such an effect on the mind of a man so impatient of control as Peter. The character of this disciple is manifested even in the manner of his obedience. He could not refrain from offering his opinion that it would be altogether useless to make any further attempt to take fish at that time. We have already labored through the whole night, said he, and have taken nothing. Yet I will obey thy command. As much as to say, I will follow thy direction; but it will be an unprofitable labor; for I am satisfied we can take no fish. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the circumstances related in ver. 8, 9.

6. *Net brake.* Not so much as to

partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so *was* also James and John the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

allow the fishes to escape; but it began to break; some of the meshes perhaps were broken.

7. *Beckoned.* Made signs. Their partners, in the other boat, were probably at some considerable distance. ¶ *They began to sink.* The idea is, that the weight of the fishes was so great, that the boats were in danger of sinking.

8, 9. *Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* Peter was a man of an ardent temperament, moved by strong and sudden impulses. He could be so much excited by fear, as to deny his Master, immediately after having drawn the sword in his defence with the most indomitable courage; and in the next moment could weep bitterly at the remembrance of his folly and guilt. In the present case, he had heard the address of Jesus to the multitude, and was satisfied that he was no ordinary man. So much did he feel himself under his influence, that he did not venture to decline obeying his word, when directed to cast his net again for fish; though he ventured the remonstrance, that it would be a useless waste of time and labor. The result filled him with astonishment. At once it occurred to him, that his remonstrance was improper, and should not have been addressed to such an illustrious personage as this miracle had manifested Jesus to be; and he fell on his knees and confessed his sinfulness. Perhaps

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus, fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth *his* hand and touched him, saying, I will: Be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went

he feared he should be punished for his lack of faith, and for his imprudent remark; for he besought Jesus to depart. It seems to me more probable that Peter, in his confession, had reference to the events which had just occurred, than to the general sinfulness of his character. Or, according to the usual interpretation, he felt himself unworthy to be in the presence of such a mighty prophet, and hence desired him to depart.

10. *Fear not.* See note on Luke i. 13. ¶ *Catch men.* See note on Matt. iv. 19. His duty henceforward should be to gather men into the kingdom of heaven, instead of gathering fishes to their own destruction. Whether or not this miracle was designed to intimate to Peter the wonderful success which should attend his ministry, it is worthy of remark, that about three thousand were converted by his first recorded sermon; and about five thousand, by his second; Acts ii. 41; iv. 4; a result as extraordinary, to say the least, as that here recorded, and, in some respects, similar.

11. *Forsook all, &c.* See note on Matt. iv. 20. They had not much to forsake; but it was their all, and they surrendered it cheerfully. They did not lose their reward. Matt. xix. 27, 23. Nor shall any one lose his recompense, who denies himself and obeys his Lord.

12—16. See notes on Matt. viii. 2—4 and Mark i. 40—45.

there a fame abroad of him : and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 ¶ And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem : and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

18 ¶ And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy : and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins but God alone ?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering, said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts ?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto

thee, Arise, and take up thy couch and go unto thy house.

25 And immediately he arose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

27 ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom : and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house ; and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners ?

31 And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician ; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 ¶ And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees ; but thine eat and drink ?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them ?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

17—26. See notes on Matt. ix. 1—8, and Mark ii. 1—12. The particular time is not here specified, nor the place. But from Matt. ix. 1, we learn that this miracle was performed at Capernaum,

immediately after the return of Jesus from the country of the Gergesenes.

27—32. See notes on Matt. ix. 9—13.

33—35. See notes on Matt. ix. 14—17.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

39. *Having drunk old wine, &c.* Old wine is said to be more mellow and pleasant to the taste than new; so that one who was accustomed to drink old wine would not choose the new instead of it. Such seems to be the literal import of the proverb. But it was not used here as an encouragement to men to drink wine, either new or old. Our Lord's object was to illustrate a truth by the similitude of a familiar fact. Commentators differ as to the application of the proverb. Some explain the matter thus: The disciples had become accustomed to the mild requisitions of their master, and it was useless to persuade them to go back to the fasts and other rigid observances of the Jewish law. Others say, "the meaning is, that all men like their old habits best; and therefore it is, that the Pharisees are so solicitous about fastings, ver. 33."—*Pearce*. The latter interpretation best corresponds with the previous verses, in which the new garment and the new wine are generally understood to denote the new doctrine or gospel. The Jews clung with the utmost tenacity to their old customs. Even those who embraced Christianity earnestly insisted that circumcision and some other rites of the law should be observed by the Christians, both Jews and Gentiles. See Acts xv. 1, 5. Much more would the unbelieving Jews be unwilling to forsake their old habits, and adopt new ones, which they regarded as unlawful.

## CHAPTER VI.

AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn-fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath-days?

3 And Jesus answering them, said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was a hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of

## CHAPTER VI.

1—5. See notes on Matt. xii. 1—8.

1. *Second sabbath after the first.* As the word which occurs here is found nowhere else, and as its meaning is not obvious, this phrase has occasioned no small perplexity. Campbell translates, "On the sabbath called second prime," or, second first, and adds,—“Among the different explanations which are given of the term *deuteroptōtos*, (*δευτεροπώτος*,) I find nothing but conjecture, and therefore think it is the safest way to render the word by one similarly formed in our language. This is what all the best translators have done in Latin. In the Syriac, there is no word answering to it. The common version has, in this instance, neither followed the letter, nor given us words which convey any determinate sense.” Among the *conjectures*, this seems as reasonable as any; the second day of the passover or feast of unleavened bread was distinguished as a great festival; on this day the wave-sheaf was offered; Lev. xxiii. 11; from this day, the seven sabbaths or fifty days were reckoned to the day of pentecost. And it is supposed that, as the Romish church and others reckon the first Sabbath after Trinity, or Easter, or Whitsunday, and second, and third, &c., so the Jews reckoned the sabbaths from this *second* day of the feast until pentecost, as the second first, second second, second third, &c.; that is, the first, second, and third, after



God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him, which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue, and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered:

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I

the great second day of the passover. If this conjecture be correct, then the day denoted in the text was the first sabbath succeeding the second day of the passover. It is known that at this season in the year, answering to the early part of April, the grain in Palestine is in the ear, as here represented.

6—11. See notes on Matt. xii. 9—13.

11. *Filled with madness.* According to the account given by Matthew and Mark, the scribes and Pharisees attempted to entrap Jesus, by challenging him to perform a work on the sabbath, which they held to be unlawful; he had compelled them to admit by their silence, that this very work was lawful and commendable; and having done so, he performed a manifest miracle in presence of the multitude. They were foiled at all points. They dared not accuse him of violating the sabbath; for he had shown that they were accustomed, notwithstanding their high professions of veneration for the day, to do those things which were at least equally inconsistent with its strict observance; and that he had performed a miracle, they could not deny, for it was so public that there could be no suspicion of deception, and of a kind which mere human power could not accomplish. They saw themselves, there-

will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles;

14 Simon (whom he also named Peter) and Andrew his brother,

fore, disgraced publicly as false accusers, and as unreasonable unbelievers in a manifestation of divine power. The effect of this transaction, they clearly saw, would be to lessen their own reputation, and to increase the confidence of the multitude in Jesus. They were stung with envy, and were "exceedingly mad," or filled with madness. ¶ *And communed one with another, &c.* Luke does not particularly describe the character of this consultation. But Matthew says "the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him." They were conscious that they could not overcome him by argument, nor convict him of deception or any imposture; they would not believe in him, nor confess themselves followers of one whom they so much hated; the alternative was, to destroy his life. This they eventually accomplished; but, at this time, their evil designs were thwarted by his retirement to another place. Matt. xii. 15.

12—16. See notes on Matt. x. 1—4, and Mark iii. 13—19.

13. *Apostles.* Messengers. Angels also are messengers. The etymological distinction between the two is this; angels are *announcers*, or those who make known; messengers are those

James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain; and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

who are sent to execute a mission of whatever kind. The English word expresses both ideas, and may be applied to both angels and apostles. The term apostles, though general in its signification, and though sometimes applied to other persons, as 2 Cor. viii. 23, is now almost exclusively limited to the twelve individuals here named, with the addition of Matthias, who was elected to supply the place of Judas, and Paul, who was subsequently "called to be an apostle," not by men, but by the Lord Jesus and by special revelation. Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 1, 12.

17. *Stood in the plain.* The discourse which follows, ver. 20—49, is so similar to the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. ch. v., vi., vii., that it is generally considered to be the same; but Matthew distinctly declares that, when Jesus delivered that sermon, he was *sitting* on the mountain, while Luke seems to say that, at this time, he was *standing* on the plain. It should be observed, however, that there is no necessary contradiction between the two accounts. Luke says that Jesus healed many of their diseases *there*, that is, on the plain; but he does not assert that the discourse was delivered in the same place. He does not say that Jesus

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But wo unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25 Wo unto you that are full!

returned to the mountain, ver. 12, or that he ascended another; nor does he deny it. There is nothing in the passage, which need prevent the conclusion, that, for the purpose of enabling the multitude to hear more conveniently, he ascended an eminence before he commenced his discourse.

18. *Vexed with unclean spirits.* Vexed now generally means provoked or irritated. It here means afflicted. On the subject of unclean spirits, see note at the commencement of Mark, ch. v.

19. *Went virtue out of him.* Healing power. See Mark v. 30. Such was the divine energy which God had bestowed upon him, that all who touched him, or even his garments, were healed of their infirmities and sicknesses. His power to heal the sick, without the use of ordinary means, was one of the evidences to which he appealed in proof of his Messiahship. Matt. xi. 5.

20—49. See a full illustration of this discourse in the notes on Matt. ch. v., vi., vii.

20—23. See Matt. v. 1—12.

24. The language in this and the two succeeding verses is omitted by Matthew. It has a peculiar relation to ver. 20—23, and distinctly expresses what is properly implied in those verses.

for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Wo unto you, when all men

and in the parallel place in Matthew. ¶ *Rich.* Opposed to *poor*, ver. 20. See note on Matt. v. 3. They possessed worldly goods, and trusted in them chiefly for consolation or enjoyment. So devotedly attached were they to their temporal riches, that they would not hazard their loss by becoming followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Hence he testified, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." See note on Matt. xix. 23, 24. It was a serious disadvantage to be rich, at that time, and it might well be said, *woe unto you that are rich.* By this expression, our Lord did not invoke or imprecate judgments upon the rich; but he did distinctly announce the calamity they would suffer in consequence of trusting in their riches. Disregarding Jesus, through love of riches, they would exclude themselves from the enjoyment of his gospel; and, in the approaching destruction of their nation, if they should succeed in preserving their lives, their dearly cherished treasures should perish, and they be left desolate.

25. *Woe unto you that are full.* This is the proper contrast to ver. 21. If we understand the language literally, then the idea is, that the time was approaching when those who had formerly revelled in luxury, and had disdained to listen to the warning voice of Jesus, should be reduced to the extremest poverty, even to famine. And, in the siege of Jerusalem, it is a historical fact, that the famine became so distressing that, in one instance at least, a mother fed on the flesh of her own child to appease her ravenous hunger. Or if we understand the hunger, ver. 21, in a figurative sense, as Matt. v. 6 would seem to require, then the idea is this: that those who had no desire for true righteousness, but were contented with the legal righteousness resulting from a heartless conformity to the precepts of the law and of the elders, should be aroused to a sense of their destitution, and should ardently desire the privileges they had formerly slighted. But the hunger they should then en-

shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 ¶ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good

and in the parallel place in Matthew. ¶ *Rich.* Opposed to *poor*, ver. 20. See note on Matt. v. 3. They possessed worldly goods, and trusted in them chiefly for consolation or enjoyment. So devotedly attached were they to their temporal riches, that they would not hazard their loss by becoming followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Hence he testified, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." See note on Matt. xix. 23, 24. It was a serious disadvantage to be rich, at that time, and it might well be said, *woe unto you that are rich.* By this expression, our Lord did not invoke or imprecate judgments upon the rich; but he did distinctly announce the calamity they would suffer in consequence of trusting in their riches. Disregarding Jesus, through love of riches, they would exclude themselves from the enjoyment of his gospel; and, in the approaching destruction of their nation, if they should succeed in preserving their lives, their dearly cherished treasures should perish, and they be left desolate.

26. *Speak well of you.* This is to be understood in a limited sense, as contrasted with ver. 22, 23. As a general truth, it is desirable to have all men speak well of us; and the surest method of obtaining such general commendation is to live peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. Prov. xvi. 7; Tit. ii. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 15. But, at that particular time, the followers of Jesus were objects of reproach and persecution. They were assured that such reproach might be regarded as an evidence of their sincerity, and therefore as a blessing; but those who were commended by the great mass of unbelievers, were to be regarded as engaged in opposition to the cause of the gospel, and a great calamity awaited them. In that age, a professor of the truth must expect reproach, as the Jews had before reproached the true prophets of God. So it was an omen of evil to any one if all spake well of him, for thus had they been accustomed to speak of false prophets. ¶ *Their fathers.* Their ancestors generally. ¶ *False prophets.* See note on Matt. vii. 15.

27, 23. See Matt. v. 44.

to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer also the other, and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to *take* thy coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend to *them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward

shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them; Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect, shall be as his master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the

29, 30. See Matt. v. 39—42.

31. See Matt. vii. 12.

32—36. See Matt. v. 43—48.

37, 33. See Matt. vii. 1, 2.

33. *Pressed down*. By thus compressing figs and grapes, which were common articles of traffic in the East, as well as many other kinds of goods which are bought and sold by measure, a larger quantity may be put in a vessel of a given size. ¶ *Shaken together*. The same effect may be produced, to some extent, by shaking the measure, that the mass may become more compact. ¶ *Into your bosom*. Here is an allusion to the usual dress of the Jews, who wore a loose flowing robe or tunic, secured by a belt around the waist; and the upper part of the garments, thus secured, was frequently converted to the same use as our more modern pockets.

39. See Matt. xv. 14.

40. *The disciple*, &c. A similar phrase occurs in Matt. x. 24, 25, but with a somewhat different meaning. It there indicates that the disciples must expect to endure such persecutions as their Master had endured. Here it denotes the obligation of disciples to imitate the conduct of their Master. They were no longer to follow the blind and besotted Jewish teachers, in their selfishness and spiritual pride, but to cherish and exercise that spirit of universal benevolence and fervent love to all men, which their Master exhibited in his precepts and example. They were to strive to become perfect, by imitating him. And thus would they become "Children of the Highest," whose image he was. See ver. 35.

41, 42. See Matt. vii. 3—5.

beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 ¶ And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like.

43, 44. See Matt. vii. 16—19.

45. See note on Matt. xii. 34, 35.

46—49. See Matt. vii. 21—27.

## CHAPTER VII.

1—10. See notes on Matt. viii. 5—13. This account varies somewhat from that given by Matthew, where the centurion is represented as having made his request personally. The two may be easily harmonized, by supposing that the centurion first engaged certain elders of the Jews to intercede for him, ver. 3; then, finding that Jesus was about to visit his house, contrary to his expectation, he sent friends to declare his unworthiness of such honor, ver. 6; and afterwards, when he discovered Jesus still approaching, went out himself and made a personal application and acknowledgment of unworthiness, as related by Matthew. Others suppose the centurion did not go personally to meet Jesus, but is only said to have done so by sending messengers, according to the maxim that whatever one

48 He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

## CHAPTER VII.

NOW, when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

performs by an authorized agent is to be considered his personal act. I prefer the former interpretation, partly because it does not seem reasonable, that a man so manifestly courteous, modest, and anxious, as this centurion, would remain in his house, when one was approaching, whom he acknowledged to be so much his superior. Common civility would require more respectful attention. Although he first professed himself unworthy even to approach Jesus to speak with him, yet when he saw that he was resolved to enter his dwelling, he would go out and salute his illustrious visitor, as Matthew represents. While he was engaged in the interview, his friends, who had preceded him with the message, probably returned to the house, and "found the servant whole that had been sick," ver. 10. But according to either interpretation, no contradiction exists between the two accounts, which need occasion the least difficulty. Such slight variations are not unusual among historians whose veracity is unquestioned.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this :

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof;

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

4. *Besought him instantly.* This word occurs in only two other places; Phil. ii. 23; Tit. iii. 13; where it is rendered *carefully* and *diligently*. Its meaning here seems to be *earnestly*. ¶ *He was worthy.* That is, in the opinion of the elders, the centurion was a fit person to receive a blessing at the hand of Jesus. Ordinarily, the Jews regarded the Gentiles as unworthy of divine blessings. But, in this case, as the centurion had manifested his love to the nation by building a synagogue, ver. 5, and possibly may have been a proselyte, he was commended to the favorable notice of our Lord.

11. *A city called Nain.* Eusebius says this city was near Endor and Mount Tabor; and geographers tell us, from Tabor the Sea of Galilee is visible, on the shore of which Capernaum was situated. The distance was such as might easily be travelled in one day.

12. *Gate of the city.* Ancient cities were generally enclosed by walls, the entrances being secured by gates. To this fact very frequent allusion is made in the scriptures. ¶ *A dead man carried out.* That is, for burial. It was not usual among the Hebrews, to bury their dead within the city walls, except in the case of very distinguished per-

9 When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched

sons. Whether or not they were aware that the gases arising from bodies in a state of decomposition are highly prejudicial to the health of the living, their laws respecting defilement by dead bodies would naturally induce them to seek resting places for the dead in retired spots, at a distance from the busy haunts of men. To such a place, the friends of the family were carrying from the city a dead man, under peculiarly affecting circumstances: he was *the only son of his mother, and she was a widow*. Such a scene strongly moved the compassionate nature of Jesus, and he resolved to wipe away the tears of the bereaved mother, and to change her mourning into joy.

13. *Weep not.* By this exhortation, he intimated that relief was at hand. In this case, the reanimation was to be immediate, and the mother was to receive back her dearly beloved son, to be the support of her declining days. The same exhortation has come with a soothing power to many a fond mother's heart, when committing to the dust the remains of a cherished child, even without the expectation of beholding his face again on earth. The promise, that the dead shall live and live forever, that friends separated on earth shall be re-

the bier : And they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

united in heaven, that then there shall be no more death, nor pain, nor sorrow, has given hope and consolation to the mourner. Though the prospect on earth be dark and cheerless, yet when the glorious realities of the future life are seen by an eye of faith, and the heart steadfastly believes that as Jesus died and rose again, even so shall the children of humanity be raised and clothed in his image, the bereaved no longer mourn without hope. They cheerfully anticipate a happy meeting ; and by that anticipation their tears are dried.

14. *Touched the bier.* It was not customary among the Hebrews to enclose the bodies of the dead in coffins ; but they wrapped them in grave clothes, and carried them in that dress to the place of sepulture, upon a bier or frame of convenient size. ¶ *Stood still.* The bearers of the corpse seem to have anticipated, from the address of Jesus to the mother, from his touching the bier, and perhaps from some peculiarity in his appearance, that a wonderful work was to be performed. They suddenly stayed their progress, and stood still, awaiting the result. ¶ *Arise.* As much as to say, Live again. The emotions of the mother, when she heard this word uttered in a commanding tone, the mingled hope and fear, the intense anxiety with which she watched the body of her son, and the joy and gratitude which overwhelmed her as she saw the infallible evidence of returning life, I will not attempt to describe.

15. *Sat up, and began to speak.* That an absolute miracle was performed, in this case, it would be folly to deny. The narrative was published during the lifetime of those who are alleged to have witnessed the event ; and it would most certainly have been contradicted, if no such event had occurred. It would have been impossible to satisfy the inhabitants of Nain and that vicinity, that a dead man had there been reanimated, in the presence of a whole funeral procession, with'n a very few years, if they had never before heard the circumstance mentioned, and could obtain no information from those who were living at the time, and might have witnessed it. The narrative, then, bears strong marks

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak : and he delivered him to his mother.

of veracity. And the circumstances connected with the alleged miracle forbid the supposition that any deception was practised. There is no evidence that Jesus had the slightest acquaintance with the parties concerned, or that he had ever before visited that city ; the meeting was wholly unexpected on their part, notwithstanding he might have foreseen it. There can be no question that the young man was actually dead. It is not to be supposed for one moment, that his mother, a widow, already bereft of her earthly protector, lone and desolate in the wide world, would consent that the body of her only son should be shut from her sight forever, unless satisfied beyond all possible doubt that life was wholly extinct. Of the restoration to life, conclusive evidence was given ; for *he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.* On the whole, the miracle is as well authenticated as any fact can be ; the circumstances are all natural, if the narrative be true ; but, if untrue, exceedingly unnatural and inexplicable.

It is worthy of remark, that the most stupendous miracles of our Lord were performed publicly, in open day, and in the presence of a sufficient number of witnesses. No concealment was sought. These things were not done in a corner. But the publicity was proportionate to the magnitude of the work. When the ruler's daughter was raised, Luke viii. 49—56, although none were present, at the moment, except her parents and three disciples, yet many had seen her dead body ; and so thoroughly persuaded were they that death had taken place, that they derided Jesus and "laughed him to scorn," when he figuratively said, "she is not dead but sleepeth ;" that is, life has not forever departed ; but, though dead, I will arouse her, and she shall live again. So, in the case of the widow's son, the miracle was performed in a public place, in presence of "much people of the city," ver. 12, whose attention was steadfastly fixed upon the subject by the preceding circumstances. And when Lazarus, who had been dead four days, and upon whose body the process of decomposition seems to have commenced, was restored to life, John xi. 1—46, many of the Jews

16 And there came a fear on all : and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us ; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 ¶ And John, calling *unto him* two of his disciples, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come ? or look we for another ?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come ? or look we for another ?

21 And in that same hour he cured many of *their* infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits ; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard ; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised,

were present, ver. 19, 31 ; and Jesus called their particular attention to the miracle by an appeal to his Father, ver. 42. Thus public was the miracle in each case. And the manner in which each was performed afforded conclusive evidence that divine energy was exerted. None of the usual restoratives were employed, or the methods used for restoring suspended animation ; but the simple words, *Arise, or Come forth*, were uttered, and the shackles of death fell asunder. Surely, no man could perform such works, unless God were with him. John iii. 2.

16. *There came a fear.* A sensation of awe and solemnity. They could not disguise to themselves the fact, that they had witnessed a manifestation of divine power ; and that they stood in the presence of one who was divinely

to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see ? A reed shaken with the wind ?

25 But what went ye out for to see ? A man clothed in soft raiment ? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see ? A prophet ? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist : but he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

commissioned for the performance of some marvellous work. Hence some said he was a great prophet, and some that God had visited his people, or manifested his favor to them.

17. *This rumor, &c.* That is, the mighty works he had performed, and the expectations of the people concerning him, were made known very extensively.

18—35. See notes on Matt. xi. 2—19.

29. *All the people, &c.* That is, the mass of the common people, including also the publicans, who came to John's baptism in such throngs, Matt. iii. 5, 6, *justified God*, or acknowledged the truth of John's message ; confessed their sinfulness, and were *baptized with his baptism* unto repentance. Such, says our Lord, was the result of the ministry of him who was more than a



30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

prophet, or a very illustrious prophet, ver. 26.

30. *The Pharisees and lawyers rejected, &c.* "Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees" presented themselves to John for baptism; Matt. iii. 7; but it is not distinctly declared that they were baptized. Perhaps they were so scandalized at his language concerning their character, and his predictions concerning the impending judgment upon them, that they retired without receiving baptism at his hands. Hence our Lord here says, they were *not baptized of him*. Or perhaps a few were baptized; but the great body remaining unbelieving and unbaptized, the general expression here would be perfectly proper. ¶ *Rejected*. Slighted; disregarded; did not believe. ¶ *The counsel of God against themselves*. If the common translation be correct, we are to understand that the counsel of God, or his message as delivered by John, was condemnatory of their conduct, as indeed it was. But the word *eis*, (εἰς,) here rendered *against*, is of very various signification, and means *to, into, or towards*, quite as often as *against*. Campbell translates, "the counsel of God with regard to themselves." This, I think, more accurately expresses the idea conveyed by the original. For the revelation of the divine counsel by John not only condemned their past conduct and present character, but it also pointed to the method by which they might attain purification, and become able to produce the proper fruit of repentance. The Messiah was to approach speedily, and to administer spiritual baptism, purifying the heart from dross. All this

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But Wisdom is justified of all her children.

36 ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

counsel was *towards or in regard to* them; but it cannot be understood as altogether and exclusively *against* them.

36. This and the following verses relate an incident in many respects similar to that recorded in Matt. xxvi. 6—13; Mark xiv. 3—9; John xii. 1—7; and Clarke says, that "this account is considered by many critics and commentators to be the same with that;" though he himself expresses an opposite opinion. I confess I have not found many commentators, who represent the four accounts as parallel; and I suspect Clarke said what he did not design; for in his notes on Matt. xxvi. 6—13, to which he here refers, there is a long examination of the question whether Matthew, Mark and John, relate the same event, but no intimation is given that Luke's narrative is parallel with either. For some remarks on this subject, see note at the end of this chapter. ¶ *One of the Pharisees*. His name was Simon, ver. 40. Unless he were that "Simon the leper," mentioned Matt. xxvi. 6, and Mark xiv. 3, we have no knowledge of him, except that he is here called a Pharisee. "It is not improbable, however, from what follows, ver. 40—47, that he had been healed by the Saviour, of some afflictive disease, and made this feast to show his gratitude."—*Birnes*. If this remark be well founded, it may not be unreasonable to regard him as Simon the leper; that is, who had been leprous, and had been healed of his leprosy by our Lord. ¶ *Sat down to meat*. Or, reclined at the feast. See note on Matt. viii. 11. *Meat* is put for any kind of food, whether animal or vegetable.

37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now, when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he

37. *In the city.* The name of the city is not given. Some suppose it was Nain, and others that it was some other city. May it not have been Bethany? ¶ *A woman — which was a sinner.* It is generally supposed that a particular kind of sinfulness,—the sin of lewdness,—is here intended; though such is by no means the general import of the word. It is used to denote sinners generally, without regard to their peculiar characteristics. See Matt. ix. 13; Luke v. 8; xiii. 2; xxiv. 7. This woman may have been a repenting prostitute; she was certainly one who had been a notorious sinner in some respect, for she was well known as such, by Simon, ver. 39. ¶ *An alabaster-box of ointment.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 7. See also Mark xiv. 3.

38. *Stood at his feet.* As he reclined at the table, after the Jewish fashion, on his side, resting on his elbow, with his feet extended back nearly on a level with his body, she might easily approach behind him, and bathe and anoint his feet as here represented. So deep was her humility, and such the power of her gratitude, that she kissed his feet, having washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

39. *Spake within himself.* That is, he thought; language is given to his thoughts. ¶ *If he were a prophet.* Simon appears to have strongly doubted whether Jesus was under the divine guidance, because he suffered this woman thus to express the emotions of her heart. He supposed that one, guided by divine inspiration, would know when a polluted person approached him, and would repel such a one immediately. ¶ *What manner of woman.* "The Pharisee had respect to

spake within himself, saying, *This* man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

the law concerning their pollution who touched the polluted. Numb. xix. 22. He knew not the gracious mercy of God in Christ. Here was Simon's failing; he thought the stains of sin so absolutely indelible, that what this sinner had been she must be reputed still, not considering the power and mercy of God, converting sinners, making their scarlet sins white as snow, and themselves new creatures; and therefore he concluded that it became not a prophet to permit such a one to touch him. Hence proceeded another foul error; that Christ did not know what condition she was of, and therefore that he was no prophet."—*Assem. Annot.* Very many have been partakers of "Simon's failing," as here described. They seem not to be conscious that God can cleanse the soul from the deepest stains of guilt. And hence the frequent exclamation of surprise that any can believe the wicked, those dying in sin, shall be admitted to the communion of the blessed and the presence of God. Could they but understand the power of God to forgive sin and to cleanse from unrighteousness, they might perceive that when he had thus purified the most wicked man who dies, such a one retains no more of pollution than he does who is least wicked when he dies, after he has been purified; for no man dies, who does not need a thorough purification, before he shall become absolutely holy and a fit companion for the holy. What is done in a less degree for some may be done in a greater degree for others. And when it shall be done, as we are assured it will be, then will all bear the spiritual image of the Lord Jesus.

41. *Five hundred pence.* About

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no

seventy dollars; the penny being about fourteen cents. ¶ *Fifty*. Fifty pence were equal to about seven dollars. The particular sums specified are of little consequence. The simple idea is, that one owed much more than the other.

42. *Frankly forgave them both*. Remitted the debt entirely, and placed both debtors in precisely the same position, as to debt, which they sustained before they became indebted. On this subject, although the divine economy is figuratively represented in the comparison here used, it must be remembered that the parallel is not complete and absolute. For some remarks on the nature of divine forgiveness, see notes on Matt. vi. 14, 15. In the case supposed, one debtor was forgiven ten times as large an amount as the other. Although both were unable to pay, and on this ground were equal, yet a much larger liability was removed from the one than from the other; for, according to the Jewish law, both were liable, not only in their property, but in their persons, which might be sold into servitude by the creditor.

43. *I suppose, &c.* Simon seems to have perceived the tendency of the question proposed, and to have hesitated in regard to the answer. He dared not absolutely give the lie to his own conscience; nor was he willing to utter the truth in positive terms; so he said, *I suppose* that he will love most unto whom most was forgiven. Some think he was unconscious of our Lord's object, and answered honestly. However this be, he most effectually condemned himself for entertaining such ungenerous suspicions. Jesus assured him that he had answered correctly, and then made the intended application, in the succeeding verses.

water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are for-

44—46. In these verses, the difference between the conduct of the Pharisee and that of the penitent woman is pointed out, and the attention of Simon specially called to it. He had not even offered the customary tokens of respect to illustrious visitors, water for the feet, the kiss of friendship, and oil for the head. But she had bedewed his feet, yea, had literally washed them with her tears, wiping them with her hair; she had repeatedly and affectionately kissed his feet, and anointed them with precious and expensive ointment. All this she had done in the most humble manner. She had not presumed to address Jesus; but in silence she had expressed her deep gratitude to him for his kindness. It was for Simon to consider, which of the two had manifested the most respect and affection towards his guest,—himself, or this despised female. The answer was perfectly obvious. But without imposing on Simon the mortification of a direct confession, our Lord proceeded to explain to him the propriety of what he had witnessed, and to show him that it was not only right but natural.

47. *Wherefore, &c.* The meaning of this verse is more distinctly expressed by Campbell: "Wherefore, I tell thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; therefore her love is great. But he to whom little is forgiven, hath little love." It is perfectly manifest, from the parable or comparison used by our Lord, that his intention was to represent the love as the result, not as the cause of forgiveness. The woman was not forgiven because she loved much, as the common translation might seem to imply; but she loved much because her many sins had been forgiven; just as Simon, having been forgiven com-

given; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

paratively little, loved but little. We may understand this according to its more literal import as indicating that Simon had been generally upright and virtuous, while the woman had been guilty of aggravated sins; so that while both felt that they had been forgiven, she realized a much greater blessing than he did, and consequently exercised a more strong and fervent love. Or, we may understand, with others, that this was spoken according to the opinion of the Jews, that diseases were always the effect of sin, and that Simon had been healed of one disease, and the woman of another much more dreadful. And this interpretation will have additional force, if, as is supposed, Simon had been healed of leprosy, being the same "Simon the leper," mentioned in Matt. xxvi. 6, and the woman was the same "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils," Luke viii. 2, that is, had been cured of insanity and restored to her right mind. Bodily diseases are not to be compared with mental maladies. It will be universally admitted that insanity is more dreadful by far than the leprosy, loathsome and fatal as is that disease; and by just so much is relief from it to be regarded as a richer blessing.

48. *Thy sins are forgiven.* See note on Matt. ix. 2. She had previously felt that her sins were forgiven; and therefore she loved much; but she now received an express assurance, perhaps a repeated assurance, of the fact. "Jesus does not say, I forgive your sins; but, with an intimate knowledge of the divine will, simply pronounces them to be forgiven. In a similar way, his apostles also were to forgive sins. Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; John xx. 23." —*Livermore.* All this may be very true. Still it must not be forgotten that Jesus did distinctly claim to have "power on earth to forgive sins," Luke v. 24. I do not understand him to claim this as an inherent, underived power; but rather as one of the gifts bestowed on him by the Father, to qualify him for his important work, and to which he refers when he says,

49 And they that sat at meat with him, began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman,

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. xxviii. 18. When, therefore, he said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," I see no impropriety in understanding the words in substantially the same sense as if he had said, "I have forgiven thy sins." Especially if, as is probable, there was an allusion to her deliverance from some dreadful bodily or mental disease; for such a disease was regarded as the penalty of sin, and its removal as an evidence of forgiveness; and there can be no question that he frequently *thus* forgave sin, and that his apostles *in his name* did likewise. See Acts iii. 6; iv. 10.

49. *Who is this, &c.* See notes on Matt. ix. 2—6. They may be understood to express astonishment at the mighty power which Jesus exhibited, or indignation at what they regarded as an impious assumption of power.

50. *Thy faith hath saved thee.* Her faith in Jesus and confidence in his ability to heal had induced her to apply for relief, and her request had been effectual. See note on Mark v. 34.

In the note on Matt. xxvi. 6—13, the possibility was suggested that the woman mentioned in that place, and in Mark xiv. 3—9, and John xii. 1—8, might be the same whose case is here narrated by Luke. Since that note was written, the subject has been again examined; and, although not able to speak with perfect confidence, I am even more strongly inclined than before to believe that the four evangelists refer to the same individual, and describe the same interview,—relating different circumstances in regard to it with reference to the particular lesson designed by each to be illustrated and enforced. I shall give, in this note, some of the reasons which seem to justify this conclusion. But, in the first place, it may be proper to show the fact distinctly, that commentators have very much differed in opinion upon this subject, and have freely indulged in conjectures; hence I may plead respectable precedent, if my opinion should be adjudged conjectural. Calmet, in his Commentary, expresses *an opinion*

**Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace.**

that the female named by Luke was Mary Magdalene, but that the other evangelists refer to Mary the sister of Lazarus, a different person. He adds : " In this opinion most of the Greek Fathers and very many critics coincide, who have written particularly upon this subject ; yet there are some exceptions. Origen, in *Cantic. hom.*, acknowledges two Marys, but in *Matt. tom.* 12, he confounds the two ; and afterwards supposes that, instead of two, there were three, which last opinion is also expressed by Euthymius in *Matt. xxvi.*, and by Theophylact in *Mark xiv.* Augustine and many of the more recent interpreters believe that the woman mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and John, was not the same who is commemorated by Luke. On the contrary, Chrysostom, in *Matt. hom.* 80, supposes that John alone names the sister of Lazarus, and that the other three evangelists refer to the woman who was a sinner. But Jerome, in *Matt. xxvi.*, differs from all the others, since he holds that Matthew and Mark relate the same event, but one entirely distinct from that which is described by John and Luke." Theophylact says,—"Many inquire how many females anointed our Lord. Some say there were two, namely, one mentioned by John, who was sister of Lazarus, and another by Matthew, Mark, and here by Luke. But I agree with those who say there were three ; one named by John, six days before the passover ; who was sister of Lazarus ; another by Matthew and Mark, two days before the passover ; and a third by Luke, in the midst of our Lord's ministry." Among the later commentators, the general opinion is that Matthew, Mark, and John, speak of one event and Luke of another ; as the authors of the Assembly's Annotations, and of the Geneva Bible, Hammond, Pearce, Doddridge, Rosenmüller, Newcome, Barnes, and Livermore. Whithy says the accounts of Matthew and Mark are parallel, and that Luke and John each relate a distinct transaction ; still on *Matt. xxvi.*, he refers to John xii., in such a manner as evidently to show that he *then* regarded the two cases as parallel. In like manner, Clarke expresses an opinion that three similar transactions are recorded, one by Luke, one by John,

and one by Matthew and Mark ; but he expresses a doubt whether John may not relate the same event as Matthew and Mark. The result thus far is this : most commentators regard the narrative of Luke as standing by itself, not parallel with either of the other evangelists ; but Chrysostom considers it parallel with Matthew and Mark, not with John, while Jerome thinks it is parallel with John, but not with Matthew and Mark. Another opinion is expressed by Grotius, namely, that all the four evangelists relate the same transaction, and that the Mary who anointed Jesus, as described by all, was the sister of Lazarus, but was not the same as Mary Magdalene. Lightfoot seems to agree with Jerome. He makes Matthew and Mark parallel with each other ; but positively asserts that the supper at which occurred the transaction recorded by them "was not the same supper with that in John xii. 1." On the other hand he seems to make Luke and John parallel, by expressing an opinion that the woman named by Luke was Mary Magdalene, and that she was also sister to Lazarus. Such are some of the various theories which have been adopted upon this confessedly difficult subject. That each of them contains some truth, is very evident ; but that either is absolutely and entirely correct, may be doubted.

There are reasons which favor a supposition different from either of the foregoing ; namely, that all the evangelists refer to the same supper, in the house of Simon at Bethany ; and that Mary the sister of Lazarus, named by John, was the same who is denominated by Luke a "sinner," vii. 37, and Mary Magdalene, viii. 2. That the same transaction is recorded by all is rendered probable, (1.) by their substantial agreement in so many particulars. Matthew, Mark, and John, agree that the supper was in Bethany ; Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that it was in the house of a man named Simon. At this supper, while Jesus reclined at the table, all agree that a female approached and anointed him with precious ointment ; Mark and John agree that this was "ointment of spikenard," and Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that it was contained in "an alabaster box." Luke and John agree that the woman anoint-

## CHAPTER VIII.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every

ed the feet of Jesus with this ointment and wiped them with the hair of her head. Matthew, Mark, and John, agree that she was blamed by some for thus wasting the ointment which might have been sold for the benefit of the poor; and its value is estimated at three hundred pence. It is true there are also points of disagreement; yet none, I apprehend, which involve an absolute contradiction; and moreover, Luke differs not more from the other three, than they differ from each other. Matthew and Mark say the head of Jesus was anointed, while Luke speaks of his feet; but here John agrees with him; and probably both head and feet were anointed. The other evangelists omit the conversation with Simon, recorded by Luke; so does John omit the remarks concerning Judas, recorded by Matthew and Mark. None except Luke intimate that this woman had been a sinner; so neither do any, except John, intimate the fact that her name was Mary, the sister of Lazarus; and the reason is obvious; John had related the case of Lazarus, and Luke was about to relate an important conversation upon the subject of forgiveness and its effects. I think it is quite as easy to harmonize the four narratives, as the three of Matthew, Mark, and John.—(2.) Each of the evangelists relates one case of anointing and one only. If this, in Luke, be different from the other, then he nowhere relates that which is described by them; nor they, that which he describes. It does not seem probable that either would omit such an impressive event, nor that two or more such events should have occurred, so very similar to each other, and, at the same time, so unusual in themselves, one of which should be noticed by one and the other or others by others. Had it not been unusual, the complaint of waste would not have been made at this offering of gratitude, any more than at the making of the feast at perhaps equal expense. Luke so frequently differs from the other evangelists in the order of time, that the place he assigns to this transaction, in his narrative, presents no insuperable difficulty. (3.) All

city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

the circumstances which serve to identify the woman named by Luke, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the sister of Lazarus, as one and the same person, serve equally to identify the several accounts as narratives of one and the same transaction. "It is supposed, and that not without good reason, that this was Mary Magdalene. If so, then had her 'seven devils' been cast out of her before; and at that time her sins had been forgiven her, our Lord at once indulging to her the cure both of her body and her mind. — There was a certain town near Jerusalem called Magdala, of a very ill fame, which perhaps was Bethany itself; or be it some other, yet might our Mary (if she was the sister of Lazarus) not unfitly be called Magdalene, either as she might have lived there sometime," &c.—*Lightfoot*, on Luke vii. 47, and viii. 2. See also his note John xii. 3. In confirmation of this suggestion, it may be observed, (a.) that if the woman named by Luke were Mary Magdalene, then we find on record a reason for the extraordinary love and gratitude which she manifested. Whatever may be understood by the "seven devils," whether insanity or gross sinfulness, or bodily disease, or all, the insanity perhaps being a consequence of the sinfulness or disease, the relief she had experienced will fully account for the fervency of her gratitude. (b.) If she were not Mary Magdalene, her conduct is not easily accounted for; because, after this outburst of feeling, we find no further trace of her devotion to Jesus; she is not identified as ever having seen him or ministered to him afterwards. But if she were Mary Magdalene, then her conduct was such as might be anticipated; she ministered to him while he lived, wept at the foot of his cross, watched the interment of his body, and was the first at the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection. Such conduct was natural in one who "loved much," having been forgiven much. (c.) That Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was the same individual concerning whom these things are recorded is probable from the peculiarity and identity of character observable

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and

throughout. In each case an extraordinary degree of gratitude and devotion is manifested,—a love surpassing that of woman. The character portrayed by the several evangelists can scarcely be conceived to belong to two or more persons; it possesses such an individuality as seems to limit its application to one alone. (d.) If Mary of Bethany were a different person from Mary Magdalene, then there is no evidence that she manifested the slightest interest in Jesus, at his trial, or crucifixion, or resurrection. Three Marys are named, and named often, and three only, in connexion with these events; Mary his mother, Mary the mother of James and Joses, who was a relative, and Mary Magdalene. And where was Mary of Bethany? She, who had been accustomed to sit at the feet of Jesus; she, who had so recently received back unto life her brother Lazarus who had been dead four days, by the mighty power of the merciful Jesus; she, who, not more than six days previously, had anointed his feet with “ointment of spikenard, very costly, and wiped his feet with her hair;” where was she in this time of trial? Her residence was not more than two miles from the scene of these events. Is it credible that she utterly abandoned her Lord, and left it to other women to minister to him? Yet not a trace appears of her presence, unless she were identical with Mary Magdalene. But suppose her the same, and the mystery is solved. The evangelists are then seen to describe her by an epithet probably well known in that age, and to attribute to her precisely such conduct as was fit and appropriate in one who had received such rich blessings, and had previously manifested such ardent gratitude.

Such are a few of the reasons which indicate the identity of the narrative and of the person whose conduct forms its prominent feature. It will be perceived that all the circumstances which affect the one point equally affect the other; for if but one transaction be narrated, only one female is named; and if only one female be named, it is exceedingly improbable that more than one transaction is recorded. I am not perfectly confident in the accuracy of

infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

my theory; but it appears to me to be attended by fewer difficulties than any other, and to explain many facts, otherwise apparently inexplicable.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1. *Showing the glad tidings, &c.* See note on Matt. ix. 35. ¶ *The twelve.* Apostles. Luke vi. 13—16.

2. *Mary, called Magdalene, &c.* “Mary Magdalene is commonly thought to have been a prostitute, before she came to the knowledge of Jesus, and then to have been remarkably penitent. So historians and painters represent her; but neither from this passage, nor from any other of the New Testament, can such a supposition be drawn. She is here represented as one who had been possessed with *seven devils*, and as one among many other women who had been healed by Jesus of evil or wicked spirits and infirmities. — But Mary Magdalene, by her behavior and constant attendance on Jesus in his life-time, at his crucifixion, and at his grave, seems to have exceeded all other women in duty and respect to his person” — *Pearce*. In this opinion I fully concur, if Mary Magdalene was not the woman mentioned in the preceding chapter. But if she was the same, as to me seems probable, then she is certainly represented as “a sinner,” and may very probably have been guilty of the sin usually attributed to her; especially if the conjecture of Lightfoot be correct, concerning the origin of her name: “There was a certain town near Jerusalem called Magdala, of a very ill fame, which perhaps was Bethany itself; or be it some other, yet might our Mary (if she was the sister of Lazarus) not unfitly be called Magdalene, either as she might have lived there some time, being there married, or have imitated the whorish customs of that place. But I am apt to think that Bethany itself might go under the name of Magdala.” ¶ *Seven devils.* The Jews “were wont to call vices by the name of devils; as, ‘an evil affection is satan;’ ‘drunkenness by new wine is a devil.’ If this Mary be the same with the woman that was a sinner in the foregoing chapter, as is believed, then,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

4 ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable :

5 A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this : The seed is the word of God.

by devils, seems to be understood the *rices* to which she was addicted."—*Lightfoot*. Others think she had been furiously insane, as it is well known that the Jews attributed insanity to demoniacal possession. Perhaps both may be right ; she may have first been vicious, and afterwards insane. But whatever her malady or infirmity may have been, she had been healed ; and her subsequent conduct is a bright example for imitation.

3. *Joanna—Susanna*. Very little is known of these females, except what is here said. ¶ *Herod*. Antipas, son of Herod the great. ¶ *Steward*. Man-

12 Those by the way-side, *are* they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns, *are they*, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground *are they*, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed ; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest ; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear : for whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

ager of his pecuniary affairs. ¶ *Ministered*, &c. Imparted their worldly goods for the supply of his wants ; and probably provided subsistence for the twelve apostles. They doubtless rendered personal services, also ; but to minister of one's *substance* implies the appropriation of property.

4—15. See notes on Matt. xiii. 1—23. Parallel also with Mark iv. 1—20.

16—18. Parallel with Mark iv. 21—25. See notes on Matt. v. 15 ; vii. 2 ; x. 26 ; xiii. 12. "God's measure is not like the measure of flesh and blood. The measure of flesh and blood is this : an empty vessel is receptive ; but a full



19 Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain*, which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples : and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed, he fell asleep : and there came down a storm of wind on the lake ; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water : and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith ? And they being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this ! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes,

neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high ? I beseech thee torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man : For oftentimes it had caught him : and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters ; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name ? And he said, Legion : because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain : and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine : and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done ; and came to Jesus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed,

one can take in no more. But God's measure is this: The full vessel is receptive of more, but the empty vessel receives nothing ; according as it is said, if hearing thou wilt hear ; that is, if thou hearest thou shalt hear ; if thou dost not hear, thou shalt not hear. The gloss is, 'if thou accustom thyself

to hear, then thou shalt hear, and learn, and add.'—*Lightfoot*.

19—21. See notes on Matt. xii. 46—50. Parallel also with Mark iii. 31—35.

22—25. See notes on Matt. viii. 23—27. Parallel also with Mark iv. 36—41.

and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it*, told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear. And he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now, the man out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way and published throughout the whole city, how great things Jesus had done unto him.

26—39. See notes on Mark v. 1—20. Parallel also with Matt. viii. 23—34.

40. See Matt. ix. 1, and Mark v. 21.

41—56. Parallel with Matt. ix. 18—26. See notes on Mark v. 22—43.

41. *Ruler of the synagogue.* See note on Matt. iv. 23. ¶ *Fell down*, &c. It was customary in the East, for those who besought favors of their superiors, thus to prostrate themselves. Matthew says *worshipped him*, meaning no more than is here expressed by prostration or falling at his feet.

42. *Only daughter.* As in the case of the lone widow, whose only son was dead and made to live again, chap. vii., so in this case, a peculiar interest attaches to the narrative from the circumstance that the sick child was an only daughter, the central object of her father's affections. ¶ *Lay a dying.* Matthew represents the ruler as saying, "my daughter is even now dead." This phrase may mean no more than "she is now dying." Or if this be doubted, certainly if she appeared to be dying when the father left the house, he had reason to believe she was dead when he addressed Jesus, and might properly use such language. In any case, there is no contradiction; for Luke states the fact, as it actually existed,—the damsel

40 And it came to pass, *that*, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 ¶ And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But, as he went, the people thronged him.

43 ¶ And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind *him* and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

was dying; while Matthew gives the language of the father, representing his belief that she was dead.

43. *Spent all her living.* Expended all her property. Her disease had been of long continuance; she had obtained all the medical assistance within her power, and not only was not healed, but, as Mark says, having "suffered many things of many physicians," she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Disappointed, reduced to poverty, and despairing of relief by ordinary means, she approached Jesus, hoping and believing his power would be sufficient to bestow the desired blessing.

44. *Touched the border*, &c. This she did, through faith in his healing power; for she believed, "if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Matt. ix. 21. ¶ *Immediately*, &c. The effect was instantaneous; and therefore the miracle was manifest, not only to the woman, but to her friends. That such a stubborn disease, which had long resisted the efforts of many physicians, should be healed in a moment, and without the application of any visible remedy, was too plainly miraculous to admit of doubt. It should be observed, however, that she was not

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him,

healed by the garment, nor, strictly speaking, by touching the garment. But the healing power of Jesus was effectually exerted, and hence the relief was obtained, ver. 45.

45. *Who touched me?* We need not suppose that Jesus was ignorant who touched him. But he asked this question for the purpose of fixing the attention of the multitude upon the miracle. It was his custom to make his miracles profitable to the by-standers as well as to the parties immediately concerned. See John xi. 42. He designed, moreover, that the female whom he had healed should bear public testimony to the fact, so that the evidence of his power should be known and acknowledged by others. And it is not unreasonable that those who receive favors should confess the generosity of their benefactors; especially that divine blessings should be acknowledged, and the gracious Giver glorified and honored.

46. *Virtue is gone out of me.* "I am sensible that my power was just now exerted."—*Campbell*. The usual signification of the word here translated *virtue* is *power*. In this place it evidently indicates the power to heal. This had been exerted effectually. The impression on the multitude was more

Thy daughter is dead: trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not: she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were aston-

vivid, than if he had simply said, I know that some one touched me; for that would intimate no miracle.

47, 48. See notes on Mark v. 33, 34.

49, 50. See note on Mark v. 35.

51. *Peter, and James, and John*. These three disciples were highly honored on several occasions, and seem to have been the confidential friends of our Lord. They alone of the twelve were permitted to witness the transfiguration, and were forbidden to communicate what they had seen to any person whatever, until the resurrection of Jesus, Matt. xvii. 1, 9. And they alone witnessed the dreadful struggle in the garden of Gethsemane, Mark xiv. 33. They were perhaps regarded as more trustworthy than the others. They were selected to witness some of the most important events, that they might be the better prepared to convert unbelievers and strengthen the brethren at a future time. Luke xxii. 32. And most nobly did they fulfil the mission entrusted to them. It is undeniable that, of the original twelve, none are recorded to have labored so abundantly as these three. These, with the father and mother, were a sufficient number of witnesses on this occasion.

52—56. See notes on Mark v. 39—43.

ished : but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

## CHAPTER IX.

**T**HEN he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him : and he was perplexed, because it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead ;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared ; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded ; but who is this of whom I hear such things ? And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ And the apostles, when

they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him : and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals : for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes ; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 (For they were about five thousand men.) And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled : and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him ; and he asked

## CHAPTER IX.

1—5. See notes on Matt. x. 1—11 Parallel also with Mark vi. 7—10.

6. See notes on Mark vi. 12, 13.

7—9. See notes on Matt. xiv. 1, 2 Parallel also with Mark vi. 14—16.

10—17. See notes on Matt. xiv. 13—21. Parallel also with Mark vi. 30—44 and John vi. 1—13.

It was customary among the orientals, to lament the departure of the dead with loud outcries. "As soon as a person dies, the females in the family with a loud voice set up a sorrowful cry."—*Jahn*. Such was the weeping and wailing when Jesus entered the ruler's house. He speedily converted their grief into joy, and their lamentations into thanksgivings.

them, saying, Who say the people that I am?

19 They answering, said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, That one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But who say ye that I am? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing,

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 ¶ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let

him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.

18—27. See notes on Matt. xvi. 13—23. Parallel also with Mark viii. 27—33; ix. 1.

20. *The Christ of God.* The *anointed* of God. The phrase is different in the other evangelists, but the idea is the same; namely, that Jesus was the promised Messiah; the messenger of the Most High, anointed or consecrated to the performance of a mighty work; but not the Supreme God himself. If, in this matter, Peter had made such a gross mistake as to call him the Son of God, or the Christ of God, when he was actually the God of the universe, he would surely have been corrected. He evidently did not fully understand the object which the Messiah came to accomplish; yet we cannot suppose he infinitely mistook his nature, when, instead of being corrected, he was assured that his heavenly Father had revealed the truth to him. Matt. xvi. 17.

23. *Daily.* Continually. That is, unless a man were willing *habitually* to deny himself, and to encounter all the trials, persecutions, and dangers, to which disciples were exposed, he was not worthy to be a disciple. Temporary zeal, or self-denial, or suffering, was not enough. Jesus desired no disciples, except such as would endure unto the end. He often adverted to the perils which those must encounter who would follow him, and admonished them that fortitude, perseverance, and constant self-

denial, were necessary, if they would be true disciples.

26, 27. *In his own glory, &c.* Luke employs more terms than the other evangelists, in describing the glory of Christ's coming in his kingdom. He says he should "come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels." There is no instance in which his coming is announced in more exalted terms. Many suppose this coming is yet future. Some have attempted to fix even the precise day. On the twenty-second day of the very month in which this note is written, (October, A. D. 1844,) a large number of honest but misguided persons looked, with the utmost anxiety, and in a state of maddening excitement, for the coming of the Lord. But the disciples were assured that this glorious coming should be witnessed by some of their own number; of course it is not to be regarded as an event yet future. "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God;" or, as Matthew expresses it, "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," and Mark, "till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." It would seem impossible to find terms more expressive of certainty, to prove the fulfilment of the prediction during the life-time of some who heard it uttered. So manifest is the fact, that most commentators admit it, however

28 ¶ And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white and glistering.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias :

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed

inconsistent the admission may be with some other opinions they entertain.

23—36. See notes on Matt. xvii. 1—9. Parallel also with Mark ix. 2—10.

32. *Heavy with sleep.* Fatigued and exhausted, nature claimed repose ; and the three disciples fell asleep. This circumstance is not mentioned by the other evangelists. Their sleep, during a short time, did not prevent them from seeing and hearing all which concerned them. The conversation with our Lord, concerning his approaching decease, was designed especially for him, to inspire him with fortitude to meet the event which he contemplated with such evident sensibility and dread. "It may seem remarkable that they should fall asleep in such an occasion. But we are to bear in mind that it was in the night, and that they were probably weary with the toils of the day. Besides, they did not fall asleep while the transfiguration lasted. While Jesus was praying, or perhaps after he closed, they fell asleep.

them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.

36 And when the voice was past Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee look upon my son : for he is mine only child.

39 And lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out ; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering, said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you,

While they were sleeping, his countenance was changed, and Moses and Elias appeared. The first that they saw of it was after they awoke, being probably awaked by the shining of the light around them."—*Barnes*.

34. *They feared.* They were filled with awe, perhaps with apprehension and dread of impending harm, as they witnessed this supernatural appearance.

36. *Found alone.* That is, no longer having the company of Moses and Elias. The disciples were still present ; but looking towards the place where they had before seen three persons, they perceived Jesus standing alone. ¶ *In those days.* They did not immediately proclaim what they had witnessed ; for Jesus had "charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead." Mark ix. 9. After his resurrection, they felt themselves at liberty, and made the facts known. 2 Pet. i. 16—18.

and suffer you? Bring thy son nither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

37—42. See notes on Matt. xvii. 14—21; Mark v. 1—20; ix. 14—29.

43. *Mighty power of God.* That is, the power he had given to Jesus over the most inveterate cases of disease, both of body and mind. They had just witnessed a manifestation of that power, and they were amazed.

44. *These sayings.* Some suppose our Lord referred to what he was about to say concerning his approaching death by *these sayings*. But it seems more consistent with the whole narrative, to understand him as referring to the language uttered by those who were so much astonished at the miracle he had performed. It is not improbable that they gave utterance to their thoughts in language similar to that recorded in Luke vii. 16. Jesus foresaw that his death would shake the faith of his disciples in him as the Messiah. To fortify their minds somewhat, he called their attention to both subjects in connexion, thus: You have witnessed a mighty miracle; you have seen its effect on these persons; they are constrained to believe, as you do, that I am the Messiah. Yet I shall die, by the hands of wicked men, notwithstanding you think the Messiah shall live on the earth forever. When that event shall occur, and your faith is sorely tried, then remember what these persons have said, expressive of their conviction that I am the true Messiah. Treasure their words in your minds, so that you may recall them, and feel assured that not only yourselves, but others, were convinced

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

46 ¶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

of the truth by such miracles as none could perform except by the "power of God." Matthew and Mark add here, that Jesus not only said he should be delivered into the hands of men, but that he should be killed, and should rise again on the third day. Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 31.

45. See notes on Matt. xvii. 22, 23. So confident were they, according to the common opinion of the Jews, that the Messiah would never die, that, whenever Jesus mentioned his death and resurrection, they could not understand him accurately; but they seem to have supposed a severe trial, or season of deep depression, was intended, which should be succeeded by a more full display of his power and glory, when he would restore again the kingdom to Israel; for this they persisted in believing to be the proper work of the Messiah, even after his resurrection. Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6. On this ground alone can we account for the fact recorded in the succeeding verses, if it be related in the order of time. And even if Luke be supposed to place the *reasoning* or *disputing* for precedence among the disciples somewhat too near the declaration of their Master concerning his death, yet it is evident from the other evangelists that the dispute was after the declaration, and that only a short time intervened between the two. Matt. xvii. 22, 23; xviii. 1; Mark ix. 31—34. Such a dispute could not have occurred, had the disciples rightly understood this saying of Jesus.

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us, is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should

be received up, he steadfastly *set* his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples

46—48. See notes on Matt. xviii. 1—5. Parallel also with Mark ix. 33—37.

49, 50. See notes on Mark ix. 33—40.

51. *Received up*. The word which occurs here is a noun, not found elsewhere in the Scriptures. It is derived from the word used Mark xvi. 19, to describe the ascension of Jesus, and there rendered *received up*. It literally denotes a removal to a higher place or station. Campbell translates, "as the time of his removal approached." The reference seems to be to the time when our Lord should be removed to heaven. Knowing that he must suffer at Jerusalem, and that the time was approaching, he *steadfastly set his face to go* thither; that is, he resolved and manifested his steady resolution to go.

52. *Messengers*. The same word in the original is elsewhere rendered *angels*; this use of the word evidently shows that it does not exclusively denote heavenly beings, but is applied with equal propriety to earthly messengers. ¶ *To make ready*. "To prepare a place, lodgings, refreshments. He had no reason to expect that he would experience any kind treatment from the Samaritans if he came suddenly among them, and if they saw he was going to Jerusalem. He therefore made provisions beforehand, and thus has shown us that it is not improper to look out beforehand for the supply of our wants, and to guard against want and poverty."—*Barnes*. I add, that a proper confidence in the providential care of God, and in his promise to supply our wants, is not manifested by a heedless disregard of our own welfare, but by a diligent use of the skill, strength, and opportunities he has granted to us. We may reasonably look for his blessing upon such endeavors, but not upon idleness and carelessness. Hence it is

not only *not improper*, but it is our *duty*, to use the means we possess to provide for the wants of ourselves and those who are dependent on us. See 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 10—12.

53. *They did not receive him because*, &c. A bitter enmity existed between the Jews and Samaritans, inasmuch that they had no dealings with each other. Both the enmity and its cause are mentioned, John iv. 9, 20. It was a religious dispute, so called, which had alienated their hearts. The Jews insisted that Jerusalem was the place selected by God for the location of the temple, and that the whole nation were bound to worship him there. The Samaritans insisted that Mount Gerizim was the proper place, and had there erected a temple for themselves. Each party expected that, when the Messiah should appear, he would decide the question. Hence the woman of Samaria proposed this question to Jesus, as soon as she perceived that he was a prophet; and declared her belief that the Messiah would definitely settle all such controverted matters. John iv. 19—26. The Samaritans, having heard of the mighty works of Jesus, seem to have been aware of his pretensions to the Messiahship. As he was professedly journeying towards Jerusalem, they supposed of course he would decide against them, and give Jerusalem a preference over Gerizim. They would therefore have no intercourse with him, and were not willing even that he should enter their city for rest and refreshment. Or, if this interpretation be regarded as not fully warranted by the text, we may suppose that the Samaritans were not willing to render assistance to *any Jew* who was travelling towards Jerusalem to attend religious feasts.

54. *James and John*. The sons of Zebedee, denominated Boanerges, or sons of thunder, Mark iii. 17, from their



James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked

energy and boldness in proclaiming the gospel, or, as some suppose, from their rash zeal. I incline to the former opinion. For although a spirit of rashness and violence was manifested on this occasion, yet of John particularly it may be said, that no other one of the apostles manifested such a mild, tender, affectionate spirit as he; and no one of them, in this respect, so closely resembled their Master. I cannot think, therefore, he would bestow on John a name indicative of a bad spirit. And in regard to James, there is no evidence that he was more rash or violent in disposition than the others; but rather the contrary. ¶ *Wilt thou, &c.* They regarded the conduct of the Samaritans as a direct insult to Jesus, and requested his permission, as the party chiefly concerned, to inflict summary vengeance. ¶ *Fire from heaven.* Either lightning, generally so called; or, more probably, supernatural fire; because, although the specific character of lightning was not then understood, common and uniform observation must have satisfied them that lightning was not to be expected from a clear atmosphere, and there is no evidence that it was then cloudy. They manifestly suggested a miraculous destruction, and it is most natural to suppose they contemplated its execution by supernatural means. ¶ *As Elias did.* Men have an exceeding fondness to plead a precedent for their violent and rash proceedings. If they can find a similar case on record, they appeal to it confidently, without carefully noticing the points of difference. Had the erring disciples sufficiently noticed all the circumstances attending the case of Elijah, as recorded in 2 Kings chap. i., they might have seen that the two cases were not parallel.

55. *Rebuked them.* For manifesting a disposition so utterly inconsistent with the spirit of his gospel, and the object of his labors. ¶ *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* You are not sensible of your actual motives. You imagine you are only

them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

displaying a suitable regard for my honor and affection to my person; but, in fact, you are influenced by that spirit of hatred which all Jews bear towards the Samaritans, excited to an unwonted violence by their present conduct. It is a vindictive passion, which moves you; not a true zeal for my honor. Of similar mistakes, history is full of melancholy examples. The persecutions of Christians by Christians, in name at least, must be chiefly attributed to this source. Men begin to contend for points of religious doctrine, in good faith, and under the influence of a pure love for the truth and a pure zeal for God's glory. But as the contest progresses, the baser passions become excited; impatience of contradiction, a desire for victory, resentment for actual or supposed affronts, gradually and insensibly become predominant, until the destructive propensity is powerfully excited; and then follow deeds of cruelty and blood. And, all the while, the unhappy actors do not realize any fundamental change of motive, but confidently believe that they are merely striving for truth and righteousness, and are doing God service. They know not the true nature of their spirit.

56. *For the Son of man, &c.* As the readiest means of convincing the disciples that their excitement was improper, and their spirit unholy, Jesus calls their attention to his own desire, doctrine, and labor. He assures them he came, not to destroy, but to save. His mission was not destructive, but conservative. His spirit was not vindictive, but affectionate. If they would imitate him, they must cultivate a similar spirit, and labor in the same cause. If they failed to do this, they were not worthy disciples. If they did imitate him, they would at once and forever banish all such unholy thoughts and desires as they had just expressed. This admonition was effectual; and, from this time forward, we find no repetition of the fault in regard to these two disciples. Other things they did

57 ¶ And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee, whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

not understand; but this they both understood and felt, that if they would resemble their Master, they must love their fellow-men and do them good, and by all means and at all times refrain from injuring them. It may be added, if Jesus did not come to destroy the lives of men, much more did he not come to make them endlessly miserable,—to inflict an infinitely greater and more lasting injury. See John iii. 16, 17.

57—60. See notes on Matt. viii. 19—22.

61. *I will follow thee.* That is, I will become thy disciple, and go with thee on thy pilgrimage. To follow Jesus often means no more than to become his disciple; even as we frequently call those *followers* of an individual, who adopt his peculiar opinions. But in this case, it seems to include the idea of leaving home, and literally following Jesus on his mission of love. ¶ *Bid them farewell.* This may be understood as a pretence, under which the person was disposed to retire from the company of believers, as in ver. 59. See notes on Matt. viii. 21, 22. Others suppose he was honest, but in danger of being overcome by the persuasions of his friends, and therefore was cautioned against looking back.

62. *No man having put his hand to the plough, &c.* "The first member of this sentence is no more than a proverbial expression for a certain character, one, to wit, who, whilst he is engaged in a work of importance, allows his attention to be distracted by things

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER X.

**A**FTER these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city, and place, whither he himself would come.

foreign. The import is, that those of this description were unfit for that spiritual service in which the disciples of Jesus were to be employed. There is an implicit comparison couched in the words, but not formally proposed, as in the parables."—*Campbell*. This was especially true in that age, when discipleship exposed men to so many dangers, and to so much actual opposition and persecution, requiring in them so much fortitude and steadfastness, for its patient endurance.

## CHAPTER X.

1 *After these things.* That is, after the appointment of the twelve apostles, and the other events already narrated. ¶ *Other seventy.* Rather, seventy others. These were not constituted apostles, strictly speaking, though they were *sent forth*; they may rather be styled evangelists. It has been generally supposed that Luke was one of this number. The other evangelists omit to mention the appointment of these seventy disciples. This particular number is supposed to have been selected, because it was a favorite number among the Jews, perhaps in consequence of the fact that the family of Jacob consisted of this number when he went down into Egypt. Thus Moses appointed seventy elders to assist him, Numb. xi. 16, 25; from which appointment some of the Jewish writers date the existence of the Sanhedrim, or great council of seventy, or, as some say, seventy-two, six from a tribe. Perhaps Jesus was influenced by some such circumstance, in appoint-

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways : behold, I send

ing that particular number, perhaps not ; and possibly, the evangelist did not intend the exact number of seventy, but used the term, as was customary among the Jews, to denote simply a large number. ¶ *Two and two*. That they might counsel and encourage each other. They had a difficult and hazardous task to perform ; and their Master would not deprive them of mutual aid. See note on Matt. x. 1—5. ¶ *Whither he himself would come*. Jesus was now on a journey to Jerusalem, as it would seem. And he sent forward these messengers to proclaim, as John the Baptist had before done, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, or that the kingdom of God was drawing nigh. Thus should the attention of the people be aroused, and they be ready to hear his testimony and scrutinize it closely.

2. See note on Matt. ix. 37, 38.

3. See note on Matt. x. 16.

4. See note on Matt. x. 9, 10. Salutations among the Orientals were much more formal, and occupied much more time, than the bowing of the head or the hasty word of recognition, by which friends here salute each other without abating the speed of their progress or losing one moment of time. "The forms of salutation that prevailed among the ancient Hebrews were as follows: (1.) Be thou blessed of Jehovah. (2.) The blessing of Jehovah be upon thee. (3.) May God be with thee. (4.) May peace (that is, every blessing and prosperity) be yours. (5.) Sir, be your life prospered. — In pronouncing the forms of salutation just given, the Orientals place the right hand upon the left breast, and with much gravity incline the head. If two Arab friends of equal rank in life meet together, they mutually extend to each other the right hand, and, having clasped, they elevate them, as if to kiss them. Having advanced thus far in the ceremony, each one draws back his hand, and kisses it instead of his friend's, and then places it upon his forehead. — The Arabians are in the habit of in-

you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes : and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

quiring respecting the health of a person, when they salute him. They give thanks to God that they once more see their friend, they pray to the Almighty on his behalf, and supplicate for him every sort of prosperity. They are sometimes so animated on such occasions, as to repeat not less than ten times the ceremony of grasping hands and kissing, and the interrogations respecting each other's health. It may, therefore, be well concluded, that the salutation between friends was an occurrence which consumed some time ; and for this reason it was anciently inculcated upon messengers, who were sent upon business that required despatch, not to salute any one by the way. 2 Kings iv. 29 ; Luke x. 4."—*Jahn*. Hence it is seen that our Lord did not forbid his disciples to treat acquaintances and strangers civilly, whom they might meet by the way ; but only prohibited those formal salutations which would interfere with the timely accomplishment of the important work he had assigned them.

5. *Peace be to this house*. This was one of the customary forms of salutation. See note on Matt. x. 12. They were not to salute friends on the way ; but when they entered a house, they were to salute the household in one of the usual forms. And the particular form here selected was appropriate ; no salutation would more fully correspond with the character of the message they had to deliver, than Peace be to this household or family. They went on an errand of peace. They preached the gospel of peace. They announced that kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17 ; and that Messiah, at whose birth the heavenly hosts united in acclamations of glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. Luke ii. 14. Such was their annunciation. And they exhorted men, in conformity to the spirit of the gospel, to practise that righteousness

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that

whose fruit is peace, and quietness, and assurance forever. Isa. xxxii. 17. See also Rom. vi. 22; Gal. v. 22, 23. There was nothing in this message or exhortation to terrify the hearer, or to fill the heart with sadness; nothing to produce insanity, or to banish peace from the bosom forever. But a spirit of divine love was embodied in the gospel of grace which was announced; and well might its blessed heralds *first say, Peace be to this house*, or to this household.

6. *Son of peace.* See note on Matt. i. 1; x. 13. Son of peace, in this case, means one who is fitly disposed to hear and embrace the gospel of peace. Such a one would receive the messengers with joy, and minister cheerfully to their necessities; he would regard the spiritual blessings he received as infinitely more precious than the temporal favors he bestowed.

7. See notes on Matt. x. 11. See also Mark vi. 10.

8—12. See notes on Matt. x. 14, 15. See also Mark vi. 10, 11.

11. *Be ye sure, &c.* Although the disciples were to bear testimony against an unbelieving city, by wiping or shaking off the dust from their feet, yet they were instructed to repeat the annuncia-

the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

13 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

17 ¶ And the seventy returned

tion of the heavenly kingdom. So that, even at the latest hour, men might believe, enter the kingdom, (see note on Matt. iii. 2,) and escape the grievous temporal calamity which was soon to overwhelm the unbelieving and contumacious of that generation.

13—15. See notes on Matt. xi. 21—24.

16. See notes on Matt. x. 40, 41.

A large portion of the foregoing address or charge to the seventy disciples bears a striking resemblance to the charge given to the twelve, when they were sent out, Matt. x. 7—15; Mark vi. 7—13; Luke ix. 1—6. This however is not surprising; as both companies were sent to deliver the same message, to the same class of persons, and under similar circumstances.

17. *The seventy returned.* The evangelist here passes over all the circumstances which intervened between the departure and return of the seventy, except so far as they are embodied in the report made concerning their mission. This method of relating the various events belonging to a particular subject is not unusual with the sacred writers, nor indeed with other historians. Compare Matt. xxi. 19, 20, with

again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

Mark xi. 12—23. ¶ *Devils.* Demons. See note on Mark chap. v. Although the disciples were empowered to heal the sick, ver. 9, yet they seem to have supposed their power extended only to ordinary diseases. When they found that lunacy, epilepsy, and that class of diseases supposed by the Jews to be occasioned by demoniacal possession, also yielded to their power through the name of Jesus, they were overjoyed; and, as some think, boastfully, but according to the more probable opinion of others, gratefully, mentioned the fact, on their return.

18. *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* "I beheld satan fall like lightning from heaven."—*Campbell.* The comparison is not to the brightness, but to the swiftness, of lightning. The downfall was sudden, precipitate. Satan, as is well known, signifies simply an adversary. See notes on Matt. iv. 1; xvi. 23. Peter was addressed by this name, when he manifested an improper opposition to our Lord. In this place, it seems to denote, generally, all which was opposed to the proper work of our Lord and the success of his gospel. He had sent out disciples, giving them power to authenticate their message in his name by miracles. Their power exceeded their own expectations, and they expressed their joy. He then assured them that the same power should perform a still mightier work. It should not only overcome the most obstinate and inveterate diseases, but it should triumph over all the malignity of adversaries, in short, all which opposed itself to the firm establishment of his gospel and its full and perfect work. By a common figure of speech, he personified this spirit of opposition as one grand adversary, and described its overthrow by a fall from heaven. In the notes quoted below, will be found a reference to similar figures, both in the Scriptures and in other writings. "A similar figure is used by Cicero, when he says that Pompey fell from the stars, and by Isaiah, xiv. 12, when he describes the overthrow of the king of Babylon. It is an animated prophetic declaration of the fall of idolatry and sin, here called Satan, before the peace-

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

ful triumphs of Christianity. The pure eye of Jesus saw, as with a glance, the decline and downfall of the principalities and powers of wickedness, as with the rapidity of lightning."—*Livermore.* The succeeding note is substantially to the same purpose; for though its author believed in the existence of a personal devil, called Satan, yet he explains the downfall in reference to the *things* which were opposed to truth and righteousness, rather than to the supposed author of evil. "Though Satan be reckoned among spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places, Eph. vi. 12, yet Christ seems not here so much to respect that, as the dissolution of that kingdom he had erected in the world; he is styled the god of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4, the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12, and to him is ascribed the kingdom of darkness, Col. i. 13, and a principality over the children of disobedience. Christ therefore here foretells, that this dominion should be in great part lost by the translation of the heathens from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and Satan, being thus spoiled of his dominion, may be said to fall from heaven, by a phrase familiar both to sacred and profane writers. So of the fall of the king of Babylon, the prophet saith, How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! Isa. xiv. 12. Of the fall of the colleague of Antonius, Cicero saith, thou hast pulled him down from heaven; and when Pompey was overthrown, he is said by him to have fallen from the stars."—*Whitby.* Thus is the overthrow of idolatry and all evil said to be figuratively represented in this passage. Whitby only erred in supposing Satan to be the *author* of all this evil, instead of its *personification*. For a similar personification of the opposite principle, the principle of good or of holiness, see Prov. chap. viii. "Jesus, in Luke x. 17, does not assert the operations of demons in men, for he couples Satan with serpents and scorpions, which places us under the necessity of interpreting all of these words tropically, and of understanding by them cunning and powerful adversaries, who opposed the progress of the gospel, but, with all

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 ¶ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 All things are delivered to

their power, were unable to interrupt its advancement. The expressions which he employs are as follows. I see Satan, that is, all the adversaries of the gospel, who are afterwards called serpents, scorpions, and the enemy's host, fall like lightning from heaven, that is, from the political heaven, from power and authority. Consult Isa. xiv. 12, 13; Matt. xxiv.; Luke x. 15; Rev. xii. 7—9. See also Cicero, where he says to Mark Antony, you have hurled your colleagues down from heaven."—*Jahn*. This interpretation differs from the other, in referring Satan, or the adversary, or the opposing power, to living persons then in authority, instead of that principle of evil which was manifested in idolatry or sinfulness generally. Either interpretation is admissible, and better than that which represents Satan to mean a personal devil. Of the two, however, the former appears preferable.

19. *To tread on serpents, &c.* The manner in which these poisonous reptiles are connected with the *power of the enemy*, indicates that the phrase is to be understood figuratively. The idea is, that the disciples were under the divine protection; and the opposition against them, venomous as the bite of serpents or the sting of scorpions, should avail nothing; it should not hurt them. A similar assurance is given, Luke xxi. 16—18. Even though their lives might be destroyed in the enterprise, they should suffer no material harm, and the

me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 ¶ And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.

24 For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 ¶ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

great work should continue to prosper, and should triumph.

20. Of the success which should attend their labor, they already had evidence, in the miraculous power with which they were endowed by their Master. Yet he cautioned them not to rejoice so much in the power itself, as in the truth which that power attested. In other words, they were not to be elated by the possession of power over the most obstinate diseases of both body and mind; but to regard chiefly the fact, that the gospel, confirmed by such miracles, was true, and should be made victorious over all opposition by the influence of that divine power or energy. And that gospel gave them assurance of immortal life and happiness, which especially warranted their joy and demanded their gratitude. The exhortation, then, may be understood thus: rejoice not so much in your miraculous power, as in that hope of life and glory which that power justifies, by authenticating the gospel in which such life is promised. For an illustration of the peculiar form of the exhortation, which is a common Hebrewism, see note on Matt. ix. 13. ¶ *Names are written, &c.* An allusion to the custom of registering the names of those who were subject to the duties, and entitled to the privileges, of citizenship.

21, 22. See notes on Matt. xi. 25—27.

23, 24. See notes on Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

25. A conversation somewhat similar

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou

to this, between our Lord and a lawyer, is recorded, Matt. xxii. 34—40; Mark xii. 23—34. ¶ *Tempted him.* From the general character of the conversation, we may suppose that the question was not proposed in good faith, but with the hope that Jesus might say something which could be construed into opposition to the law, or in some other way furnish matter for accusation. The lawyer tempted him, therefore, by striving to entrap him in conversation; and most righteously was he rebuked for his folly, by being made to condemn himself and his brethren, out of his own mouth. ¶ *Inherit eternal life.* That I may obtain the privileges which belong to the Messiah's reign. There is no evidence that the Jews, at that period, attached the idea of immortal holiness and happiness to the phrase eternal life. See note on Matt. xix. 16.

26. *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* The inquirer, it should be observed, was a lawyer, one whose duty it was to be thoroughly acquainted with the Mosaic law and all its requisitions. Accordingly, our Lord required him to answer his own question; inasmuch as a conscientious performance of the duties required in the law, according to its true spirit, was sufficient to secure the blessing indicated in the question.

27, 23. See notes on Matt. xxii. 37—40. See also Mark xii. 29—31.

29. *Willing to justify himself, &c.* "Desirous to appear blameless."—*Campbell.* "He, willing to justify himself, as one who had performed the command of loving his neighbor as himself, said, Who is my neighbor? Now the corrupt tradition of the Jews having restrained this neighbor to men of their own nation and religion, to whom he might retain a very kind affection, he thought this sufficient to show, that he had satisfied that precept.

hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering, said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and de-

Christ therefore here demonstrates to him, that every person who stands in need of help, and who is capable of kindness from us, though he be of a different nation and religion, must be deemed our neighbor."—*Whitby.* Perhaps the lawyer understood Jesus to doubt his perfect obedience to the law; for he said, This do, and thou shalt live; intimating that it was at least possible that he had not yet rendered full obedience. Hence he might desire to justify himself by showing that he had in fact kept the law, as he understood it, and as he expected Jesus would explain it, in answer to his question. Others suppose the lawyer desired to appear blameless in asking the question at first, by showing that there was a real difficulty in the matter, which the words of the law did not obviate, as it yet remained a question who, or how many, were included in the word neighbor, and therefore entitled to the love of others. ¶ *Who is my neighbor?* That is, whom, or how many, does the law require me to love as my neighbors?

30—37. This is one of the most affecting, and at the same time one of the most important and instructive parables, ever recorded. It inculcates the great truth, that all men are brethren, being children of a common Father; that difference of religious or political opinions should never destroy the sentiment of mutual kindness and affection; that the most abject child of humanity is entitled to our good offices, when in distress; that we are sinful if we withhold what others need and we can impart without inconvenience; that we perform our duty only when we faithfully and cheerfully treat our distressed fellow-men as brethren, however much we may disapprove their opinions or practices. It affords a vivid illustration of the spirit of the precept recorded Matt. vii. 12. Would that all the pro

parted, leaving *him* half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

fessed followers of Jesus could be persuaded to cultivate the spirit embodied in this parable, and exemplify it in their conduct. Then, instead of bringing reproach upon the name and gospel of their Lord, by their shameless bickerings and contentions among themselves, and their unkindness and frequent cruelty to those who differ from them in opinion, they would adorn the doctrine they profess, and constrain unbelievers to say, not only, Behold how these Christians love one another, but, Behold what a godlike spirit they manifest towards the human race. Then would Christians be regarded as truly public benefactors, and the gospel, by its good fruits, would be powerfully commended to universal respect, love, and acceptance.

30. *A certain man, &c.* This translation is very literal; and yet Campbell urges that a slight transposition of the words in the original should be made, so as to be rendered thus: "A man of Jerusalem travelling to Jericho." The idea is thus more clearly and distinctly expressed, upon which much of the force and beauty of the parable depend; namely, that the man, who was robbed and wounded by thieves, neglected by the priest and Levite, and relieved by the Samaritan, was a Jew. ¶ *Jericho.* See note on Matt. xx. 29. This city was situated about twenty miles north-eastwardly from Jerusalem; and is celebrated in Jewish history as the scene of the first conquest in Canaan by Joshua. Josh. ii. 1, and chap. vi. ¶ *Fell among thieves, &c.* Travellers represent that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho "is through a series of rocky defiles, and the surrounding scenery is of the most gloomy and forbidding aspect. The whole of this road is held to be the most dangerous in Palestine; and, indeed, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient, on the one hand, to tempt to robbery and murder, and, on the other, to occasion a dread of it in those who pass that way. The bold projecting mass of rocks, the dark shadows in which everything lies buried below, the towering height of the cliffs

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as

above, and the forbidding desolation which every where reigns around, present a picture that is quite in harmony throughout all its parts."—*Calmet*. The scenery of the parable is thus seen to be appropriate. In this case, as generally, the parable was so constructed as to give it the appearance of life and reality. ¶ *Stripped—wounded—half dead.* These several descriptive terms have by many been spiritualized, as emblematical of the injuries which men suffer from sin; and then, to carry out the figure, the priest and Levite have been made to signify legal righteousness, and the Samaritan, Christ, who only is able to heal the bruises of sin. But, however the parable may incidentally illustrate sin, its effects, and salvation from it, there is not the slightest evidence that Jesus had any reference to that subject; the parable was uttered for a special and obvious purpose; and we have no right to attach to it any other meaning.

31, 32. *Certain priest—Levite.* The priests and Levites frequently passed between Jerusalem and Jericho. Large numbers of both classes dwelt at Jericho, not less than twelve thousand priests, it is said, who statedly went up to Jerusalem to perform their allotted duties; the priests, to offer sacrifice, burn incense, and discharge the other duties of the sanctuary, and the Levites, to assist and wait on the priests, to prepare incense, oil, wine, and other materials for the regular service, and to act as musicians. See note on Luke i. 9; see also 1 Chron. xxiii. to xxvi. ¶ *Passed by on the other side.* On the side of the path farthest from the wounded man. The idea is, that they saw him, knew his condition, but failed to administer relief. They went their way, leaving the unhappy traveller to perish of his wounds.

33. *Certain Samaritan.* See note on Luke ix. 53. The energy of this parable depends much on the strong contrast between the characters of the parties concerned. The wounded traveller was a Jew. The Levite and priest, who neglected him, were his own coun-



he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow, when he

trymen, and of a class who were peculiarly bound by their office to show mercy to the distressed. The man, who rendered assistance, was a Samaritan, a political and religious enemy, who knew that he and his countrymen were despised and held in utter detestation by the kindred of the wounded traveller; yet in spite of all his prejudices, in spite of all his real or fancied reasons of unfriendliness, his better nature triumphed and he *had compassion* on the poor Jew.

34. The manner in which assistance was rendered is narrated in detail, to make a more vivid impression; for our Lord designed not only to convince the judgment, but to move the feelings, of the lawyer, that he should both perceive the truth, and feel its power; both acknowledge his duty, and feel constrained to its performance by distinctly perceiving its reasonableness. ¶ *O'land wine*. These were used medicinally by the ancients; and oil continues to be thus used now. "It is a tradition, 'They spread a plaster for the sick on the Sabbath-day; that is upon condition they had mingled it with wine and oil on the evening of the Sabbath. But if they have not mixed it on the Sabbath it is forbidden. R. Simeon Ben Eliezer saith, that it is allowed by R. Meir, both to mingle the oil and wine, and also to anoint the sick, on the Sabbath-day.'"—*Lightfoot*.

35. *Two pence*. About twenty-eight cents. This may seem to be a small sum. But it should be remembered, that it was the price of two days' labor, and would purchase much more food or other necessities than can now be bought for the same sum of money. See note on Matt. xx. 2. Moreover, the generous Samaritan agreed to repay whatever additional expense should be incurred. He did not consider his duty fully performed, by relieving distress for the moment; but he provided

departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

for proper care and attendance, until the wounded man should be able to pursue his journey,—his own affairs making it inconvenient for him to remain and render personal attention.

36. *Was neighbor*. Or, performed the duty required by the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ver. 27. The object of the parable here becomes manifest. It is forcibly stated in the following language: "Everybody perceives that it is the intention of this parable to confound those malignant Jewish prejudices, which made them confine their charity to those of their own nation and kindred. Nor could anything be better adapted for the purpose than this story, which, as it is universally understood, exhibits a Samaritan overlooking all national and religious differences, and doing offices of kindness and humanity to a Jew in distress. By this means, the narrow-minded Pharisee, who put the question, is surprised into a conviction, that there is something amiable, and even divine, in surmounting all partial considerations and listening to the voice of nature, which is the voice of God, in giving relief to the unhappy."—*Campbell*. The propriety and usefulness of parables may be distinctly seen by this example. Had our Lord told the lawyer, in direct terms, that he was bound to regard all men as his neighbors, and be ready and willing to relieve the distresses of all, without regard to national or religious distinctions,—to show kindness even to a Samaritan, who was regarded by the Jews as more despicable than the Gentiles generally,—he probably would have turned away in disgust; he would perhaps have said, as some with most egregious folly have said in later times, that this exposition of duty was unreasonable, and that whatever to his mind was unreasonable could not be a revelation of truth. But when our Lord led him along, step by step, showing

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a

him one of his own kindred in distress, neglected and left to suffer and die by his own countrymen and brethren in the faith, and at last saved by a kind-hearted and benevolent Samaritan, the lawyer was constrained to confess the beauty of kindness even in an enemy, and the duty of exhibiting kindness even towards an enemy.

37. *Showed mercy.* It has been suggested that the lawyer thus answered, because he was too proud to commend a Samaritan by name. However this may be, his answer was correct. The priest and Levite did not perform the duty of a neighbor, even in the limited and partial sense in which they explained it. The Samaritan did perform it, in its most wide and comprehensive sense, by showing mercy to an enemy in distress. ¶ *Go, and do thou likewise.* This admonition, in connexion with the parable and the question which drew it forth, is of extensive import:—If you would obey the law which requires you to love your neighbor as yourself, you must imitate the conduct of the generous Samaritan: you must not confine your love and your offices of kindness to your family, your particular friends, your countrymen, or your brethren in religious faith: but, remembering that the God whom you are required to love with the whole heart is the Father of all men, you must confess the universal brotherhood of men; and, wherever you find a human being in distress, you must recognize him as a neighbor and a brother, and administer relief. The following remark of Barnes is worthy of serious consideration: “We hence see the beauty of religion. Nothing else will induce men to surmount their prejudices, to overcome opposition, and to do good to those who are at enmity with them. True religion teaches us to regard every man as our neighbor; prompts us to do good to all; to forget all national and sectional distinctions; and to aid all those who are in circumstances of poverty and want. If religion were valuable for nothing but this, it

certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.

would be the most lovely and desirable principle on earth; and all, especially in their early years, should seek it. Nothing that a young person can gain will be so valuable as the feeling that regards all the world as one great family, and to learn early to do good to all.” In connexion with these truly evangelical remarks, we shall do well to remember that, while the members of this “great family” should thus love each other, the Father of all loves all his children with a love even more pure and unchangeable. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” Matt. vii. 11.

38. *A certain village.* This village was probably Bethany, the residence of Martha, and Mary, and their brother Lazarus. John xi. 1; xii. 1, 2. See note on Matt. xxi. 1. ¶ *Received him into her house.* The phraseology would imply that the house belonged to Martha, who may have been a widow. Or it may be that she had a husband; but as he did not believe on Jesus, the hospitalities of the house were rendered by her alone. On this point, however, we have no information. It is enough, that she was a disciple and kindly entertained the Lord.

39. *Sister called Mary.* “Our Saviour is now at the feast of Tabernacles; and visits Bethany, where there had grown a friendship betwixt himself and Lazarus’ family, upon his having cast out so many devils out of Mary his sister. For it is no foreign thing to suppose she was that Mary that was called Magdalene, because Bethany itself was called Magdala.”—*Lightfoot.* See note on Luke vii. 50. Whether this Mary was the same called Magdalene or not, she was one of our Lord’s most ardent and devoted disciples. Her conduct on this occasion manifests her desire to know the truths of the gospel, and her devotion to the Master is vividly portrayed in John xii. 3. Altogether, her

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

character, and that of her sister and brother, was so amiable, and they were so faithful to him and his gospel, that Jesus loved them. John xi. 5. ¶ *Sat at Jesus' feet.* To sit at the feet of a teacher, was the ancient posture of learners; that is, to sit in a lower and numble place. Hence the phrase is figuratively used to denote discipleship. Paul says he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, Acts xxii. 3; meaning that he had been a disciple, that is, a scholar or learner, of Gamaliel. In this place, the meaning is, that Mary gave her whole attention to Jesus, and *heard his word*, that she might be instructed by him in the things belonging to her peace.

40. *Martha was cumbered, &c.* Or, distracted, perplexed, harassed. Wakefield translates the phrase, "Martha was harassing herself." The Improved Version has it, "Martha was harassed." The meaning is, that Martha, being mistress of the house and having charge of the entertainment, had much anxiety to prepare a meal befitting the character of her guest; and was fatigued, in body and mind, by her exertions. ¶ *Dost thou not care, &c.* She appealed to our Lord, whether it was right for her to endure the whole labor, while Mary rendered no assistance. Her appeal manifests somewhat too much impatience, and evidently shows that her temper was disturbed. Regarding Jesus as a prophet of truth, much more regarding him as the Messiah, she could not have addressed him thus, if she had been perfectly calm and unmoved. She seems to insinuate that Jesus hindered Mary, or encouraged her in idleness, by conversing with her, when she should be engaged in household duties; and, in so many words, requests him to cease from that conversation, and to command Mary to assist in preparing the meal. Jesus kindly and affectionately rebuked her for this impropriety of feeling and language, as related in the succeeding verses.

41. *Thou art careful, and troubled.* Thou art full of care and anxiety; im-

41 And Jesus answered, and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part,

properly and uncomfortably solicitous. ¶ *About many things.* About your household duties and worldly affairs. Some suppose, with apparent good reason, that he had particular reference to her principal cause of anxiety at that time, that she might provide a sufficient variety of dishes, or kinds of food, to do honor to the occasion, and represented the labor which she was thus imposing upon herself, as unnecessary.

42. *But one thing is needful.* This phrase has been variously interpreted. Some suppose that, by *one thing*, Jesus intended one dish, or one kind of food; and they understand his meaning to be this; you are giving yourself much useless anxiety and trouble, to prepare so great a variety; one kind of food is all which is necessary for us. So Clarke: "One single dish, the simplest and plainest possible, is such as best suits me and my disciples, whose meat and drink it is to do the will of our heavenly Father." Thus also Pearce: "There is need of one thing only; that is, of one dish only, for me to eat of." These, and others who adopt the same interpretation, suppose the sentence ends here; and that what follows, in this verse, is an entirely distinct sentence, having reference, however, to the former remark;—Mary is more wise in her choice than you are; you are anxious to provide many dishes, when only one is necessary; but she is anxious to hear the word of truth; she hath made a wise selection, and chosen that which is good and permanent. Others interpret differently, understanding the whole as one sentence. "Not one dish only to eat of, as Theophylact and many of the fathers descant here, but the better part or that spiritual wisdom, which Mary made it her chief care to labor after. So Arrian saith of the government of the mind and the fixing it upon that only, which is in our power, and which we cannot be deprived of, 'when we might contract our cares to one thing, and cleave to that alone, we choose rather to be bound to and troubled about many things.'"—*Whitby.* "Jesus does

which shall not be taken away from her.

## CHAPTER XI.

**A**ND it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

not absolutely condemn the solicitude of Martha, but prefers the docility and attention of Mary. The external offices of charity, to receive guests, to relieve the poor, are indeed worthy of high honor; but the exercise of prayer and meditation is preferable. Martha is not reprehended for her good service, saith Ambrosius, upon this place in Luke, but Mary is preferred, who had chosen a better part."—*Calmet*. "Thou takest a great deal of unnecessary, though not culpable, pains, (as in all worldly business there is a great deal more solicitude than is necessary,) but the one only thing which is absolutely necessary, the hearing my word in order to the keeping it, the receiving advantage by my coming to thy house, is a much more acceptable thing to me, than the entertaining me with so much diligence, and the advantage of this will continue to Mary to all eternity."—*Hammond*. To the same purpose, substantially, Doddridge and others. This latter interpretation seems more consistent than the former with the general scope of the place. One thing is needful; that is, one thing is chiefly necessary, needful by eminence. There is something of more importance than the preparation of customary food. Spiritual food is even more important; and this, Mary is receiving. A similar idea occurs, Matt. vi. 31—33. It should be observed, however, that our Lord does not say, *only* one thing is needful; but simply, *one thing is needful*. The word *but* does not here have the force of *only*; in the original, it is a simple connective, sometimes rendered *but*, and perhaps as frequently, *and*. The equivocal appearance of the translation does not exist in the original.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves:

## CHAPTER XI.

1—4. See notes on Matt. vi. 9—13.

2. *When ye pray, say, &c.* Matthew records the instruction thus: "After this manner pray ye." Matt. vi. 9. Hence it appears that Jesus did not require his disciples uniformly to use these particular words in prayer; but grouped together the principal subjects of prayer, thus instructing them as to the *matter*, but leaving the *form* to be varied as circumstances might require.

3. *Day by day.* Matthew says, "this day." The meaning is, we should realize our constant dependence on God for sustenance, as for all blessings, and should look to him for all which we need, both now and during our whole existence. Every successive moment brings new wants; and it is God alone who is able to afford the necessary supply. As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so should our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, for the mercies we need, from day to day. Ps. cxliii. 2.

4. *Indebted to us.* This is to be understood, not of pecuniary debts, but of trespasses or sins. We implore God to forgive us our sins; we should also forgive them who trespass against us; else we cannot enjoy forgiveness. See note on Matt. vi. 14, 15. ¶ *But deliver us from evil.* This phrase is omitted by Griesbach, and marked as spurious by Knapp; but the corresponding phrase in Matthew is allowed by them and by all critics to be genuine. It may therefore be regarded as a part of the prayer; and the subject of the petition is certainly of vast importance. We are co

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children

are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give

stantly exposed to dangers from which none but God can preserve us. We should beseech him to grant deliverance, and be grateful for his providential care.

5—8. This passage is generally understood as an encouragement to importunate prayer. Thus Barnes sums up what he regards as the great practical lesson here taught, as follows: "Men, when they ask anything of God, often give over seeking. They go *once*, and if it is not granted, they are discouraged. It is not so when we ask anything of men. *Then* we persevere; we take no denial; we go again, and press the matter till we obtain it. So we should of God. We should go again and again, until the prayer is heard, and God grants what we ask of him." In this view, substantially, very many commentators agree; yet I strongly doubt its correctness. If God were altogether such a one as the man here described, unwilling to grant favors, regarding the exercise of kindness as burdensome to himself, and at last induced to bestow blessings merely to avoid being perpetually disturbed by clamorous cries for relief, we might suppose that our Lord recommended such importunity as the surest method of obtaining what we desire. I think no one is disposed to push the matter to such an extremity; yet I see not on what other principle this interpretation can be sustained. If we insist that blessings are to be obtained by importunity, by taking no denial, by persisting in our demands until they be granted, as the lesson taught in this parable, can we consistently deny that the motive for granting the favor requested should have a similar literal interpretation? In my judgment, our Lord designed rather to inspire *confidence* in his disciples, than to recommend *importunity*. To do this, he first selected one of the most unpromising cases. A man, who regarded his own ease more than the wants of his brethren, is aroused at midnight by an application for assistance; he is unwilling to be thus troubled, and does not wish to have his children

disturbed; and he tells the applicant to depart. But the uproar becomes more furious; he finds that he shall have no sleep; and, as the less of two evils, he rises and grants the desired favor. Even in such a case, and of such a man, our Lord says, a favor may be obtained; much more, of God. If we may go to such a churlish, unaccommodating man as the one represented in the parable, with hope of success, how much more confidently should we approach our heavenly Father, who knoweth already what we actually need, and who is more ready to bestow than we are to ask. Having thus prepared the minds of his disciples, our Lord gave the direct, plain assurance, that their proper petitions should be granted, ver. 9, 10, and confirmed his assurance by another comparison, of a different kind, ver. 11—13. In the first, he exhorted them to have confidence, because blessings could be extorted even from one who was unfeeling and hard-hearted; in the second, he appealed to the strongest natural affection, the affection of parents towards their children, and assured them that God was more ready to bestow blessings than even the most affectionate parents. Such appears to be the most plain and obvious meaning of the whole passage.

5. *At midnight.* To give full effect to the comparison, the application is represented as made at the most unpropitious time, at an hour when men are unwilling to be disturbed from their slumbers.

7. *My children are with me in bed.* This phrase in the original implies no more than that the children as well as the father were in bed; not necessarily in the same bed.

8. *His importunity.* To importune properly denotes "to disquiet or disturb to trouble or molest, that is, by incessant solicitation; to beg, beseech, or solicit, without ceasing; incessantly; tiresomely; vexatiously; unseasonably." —*Richardson.* Importunity implies a lack of proper modesty and of regard for the comfort of others.

nim as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

14 ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.

16 And others tempting *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house, falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided

against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he

9-13. See note on Matt. vii. 7-11.

12. *Scorpion*. This "is the largest and most malignant of all the insect tribes. It somewhat resembles the lobster in its general appearance, but is much more hideous. Those found in Europe seldom exceed four inches in length; but in the tropical climates it is no uncommon thing to meet with them twelve inches long. There are few animals more formidable, and none more irascible, than the scorpion; but happily for mankind, they are equally destructive to their own species, as to other animals. — It may be necessary to

remark on the contrast which our Lord draws between a scorpion and an egg, that the body of this insect is much like an egg; especially those of the white kind, which is the first species mentioned by *Ælian*, *Avicenna*, and others; and *Bochart* has shown that the scorpions of Judea were about the size of an egg." — *Calmet*.

14-23. See notes on Matt. xii. 22-30. Parallel also with Mark iii. 22-27.

24-26. See notes on Matt. xii. 43-45.

27. *Blessed*, &c. A periphrasis *tor*

spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea, rather blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation : they seek a sign ; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them : for she came from the utmost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it : for

*thy mother* ; happy, fortunate, blessed, is thy mother. Some have supposed this exclamation was occasioned by hearing the name of our Lord's mother mentioned ; for she seems to have approached during this conversation. Matt. xii. 47. When her name was announced, some female exclaimed, how happy must be the mother of such a son.

23. *Yea, rather blessed, &c.* By this form of expression, Jesus may be understood to say that it was truly an honor and source of happiness to his mother, to have such a son ; but that it was still *more* essential to permanent happiness, that one should hear the word of God, and keep it. Natural affinity, though productive of happiness, was of far less consequence than that spiritual affinity by which all true disciples became indeed his brethren and sisters. See Matt. xii. 43—50 ; Mark iii. 33—35 ; Luke viii. 21.

29—32. See notes on Matt. xii. 33—42.

33—35. See notes on Matt. v. 15 ; vi. 72, 25

37. *A certain Pharisee besought, &c.*

they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye : therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light ; as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him : and he went in and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not

From the character of the reproofs which Jesus had been administering to the Jews, and from the subsequent circumstances, it may be reasonably concluded, that this offer of hospitality was not the offspring of friendly motives. The Pharisee probably desired to withdraw Jesus from the multitude, with whom he was just at that time popular ; and possibly he supposed he might obtain some advantage over him, in a select company composed chiefly of Pharisees. Perhaps the Pharisee so far mistook the character of Jesus, as to suppose he would be overawed by the severe and sanctified demeanor of those with whom he should dine. If such were his expectation, most bitterly was he disappointed ; for, on this occasion, as elsewhere and at other times, Jesus bore such a direct and powerful testimony against their hypocrisy and ungodliness, as must have made their ears tingle.

33. *Saw it.* That is, saw that Jesus sat down at the table, without performing the customary washing. See note

first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

on Mark vii. 4. As the ancients did not use knives and forks at their meals, but conveyed their food from the dish to the mouth with their fingers, common cleanliness required that their hands should be washed, before eating, if they were not already clean. But the Jews had carried this matter to an excess, and even made it an indispensable ceremony. Jesus had occasion to rebuke their adherence to ceremony, or rather their undue estimation of ceremonies, in religion; and, as his hands had at this time no need of washing, he declined a conformity to their custom; thus showing his disregard and disapproval of all which was merely ceremonial or useless. And this gave him an opportunity to point out the important distinction, ver. 39, between ceremonial cleanness and actual purity of heart, and to show the Pharisees that they were too scrupulous concerning the former, and too little attentive to the latter.

39. Perceiving the astonishment of the Pharisee, that he had not first washed before dinner, ver. 38, our Lord immediately commenced a discourse upon a subject, very ungrateful to Pharisaic ears, but of vast importance; the very subject to which he intended to attract attention by neglecting to wash. It may be observed, that our Lord's precepts and practice were always consistent and harmonious. Whatever he required of others, he himself performed. His life was an exact embodiment of his doctrine, in regard to all the duties prescribed towards God and towards men. In this particular case, had he conformed to the ceremony so scrupulously observed by the Pharisees, his condemnation of their reliance upon ceremonies would have lost much of its force. It were well, if all religious teachers were somewhat more cautious, in this respect. Many excellent precepts have been neutralized, as to their effect, by the inconsistent conduct of teachers. When men exhort to the practice of virtues to which they are personally strangers, or to abstinence from vices which they are

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you.

known to practise, their exhortations are as water spilled on the ground, or words written in the sand. ¶ *Make clean the outside, &c.* See note on Matt. xxiii. 25. ¶ *Ravening.* Rapaciousness, or robbery. The literal platter was scrupulously washed, but was filled with the fruits of extortion and robbery. See Matt. xxiii. 14. Figuratively, they were punctiliously exact in cleansing every ceremonial defilement of their bodies, while their hearts were full of moral corruption.

40. *Ye fools.* Their conduct manifested the most unmitigated folly. Professing to be worshippers of God, and acknowledging that the secrets of all hearts were open to his sight, they contented themselves with outward ablutions, merely putting away the filthiness of the flesh, and utterly neglected that purification of the heart, which should give them a good conscience towards God. 1 Pet. iii. 21. The ostrich, who imagines he conceals his huge, unsightly body, by thrusting his head in the sand, manifests less folly than he who flatters himself that he can hide the deformity of his heart from the all-seeing God, by outward cleansings, or a hypocritical personation of godliness. ¶ *Did not he that made, &c.* Did not the same God make the heart or the mind, who made the body? He can see the one as distinctly as the other. It is much more important that the jewel should be preserved from harm, than the case which encloses it. Purity of heart is infinitely more important than cleanliness of body; and a good conscience before God, than the reputation of sanctity among men.

41. *But rather give alms of such things as ye have, &c.* Commentators differ much in their exposition of this verse. (1.) It is said to mean "either what was within the dishes spoken of before; or what was within their houses or power; or what they had at hand, for so *ta enonta* (τὰ ἐνόντα) is used by the purest Greek writers. Cease from rapine; far from spoiling the poor by wicked exactions, rather give them alms



42 But wo unto you, Pharisees ! for ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God : these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Wo unto you, Pharisees ! for ye love the uppermost seats in the

of everything you possess ; and when a part of everything you have is sincerely consecrated to God, for the use of the poor, then all that remains will be clean unto you ; and you will have the blessing of God in your basket and store, and everything will be sanctified to you."—*Clarke*. (2.) "The best way of purifying yourselves, estates, meats, and drinks, &c., from all pollution cleaving to them, is (instead of that which you Pharisees attempt by washing your hands, your vessels, &c.,) by works of mercy and liberal alms-giving, as far as you are able, restoring to the injured, or if there be not place for that, giving to those that want."—*Hammond*. This author, in a long note, explains his meaning to be, that they were to divest themselves of all their unlawful gains, by making restitution to each one whom they had injured ; and so far as this could not be done, by reason of the death or absence of the injured party, that they should bestow an equal or larger amount upon the poor ; in short, that they should in no case retain any portion of the wages of iniquity, but bestow the uttermost fraction in deeds of justice or mercy. In this general view, Barnes and others coincide. Our Lord's language, however, must be understood in a qualified sense. It is utterly inconsistent with the plainest principles of the gospel, to understand him to say, that those who had amassed riches, by oppressing and defrauding others, should be made every whit pure, by bestowing a pittance of their ill-gotten treasures upon the poor ; and alms-giving does not ordinarily imply the bestowment of more than a part of one's possessions. The meaning may be, that by cherishing that spirit, in all respects, towards their fellow-men, which is manifested in the bestowment of alms upon the poor, that is, a spirit of benevolence, kindness, compassion, and love, they would thus become pure.

42. See note on the preceding verse,

synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware of *them*.

45 ¶ Then answered one of the

and on Matt. xxiii. 23. ¶ *Rue*. A garden herb, sometimes used medicinally. It is bitter, and strong-scented. It is doubted whether such herbs were subject to the law of tithe ; but the Pharisees were scrupulous in these minor matters as an offset against their manifold and heinous transgressions of the law.

43. See note on Matt. xxiii. 6.

44. See note on Matt. xxiii. 27. ¶ *As graves, &c.* According to the Jewish law, ceremonial or legal pollution was contracted by treading on a grave. When a grave was so situated as not to be distinctly visible, the place had the appearance of being pure, when in fact it was unclean and polluting. Such, our Lord says, was the condition of the Pharisees. By their outward sanctity of demeanor, and by their exact observance of ceremonies, they appeared unto men to be pure ; but within, like a concealed grave, they were full of corruption, notwithstanding men were not aware of it.

45. *One of the lawyers*. A class of men, skilled in the law, and professional expounders of it. The precise difference, if any, between this class and the scribes, is very imperfectly understood. See note on Matt. xxii. 35. ¶ *Thou reproachest us also*. Either the lawyers were generally Pharisees, or their conduct was so similar that this lawyer considered any reproof of them equally directed against him and his brethren. "Sinners often consider faithfulness as reproach. They know not how to separate them. Jesus did not reproach or abuse them. He dealt faithfully with them ; reproved them ; told them the unvarnished truth. Such faithfulness is rare ; but when it is used, we must expect that men will flinch, and perhaps be enraged ; and though their consciences tell them they are guilty, still they will consider it as abuse."—*Barnes*. Perhaps this lawyer expected to intimidate our Lord, by intimating the dan-

lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Wo unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Wo unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness, that

ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

ger of speaking against the powerful class of lawyers, or scribes, a class who had such great influence over the public mind. If so, he grossly deceived himself; for our Lord, with unflinching energy, administered a direct reproof to this class for their hypocrisy and iniquity, of which they seem to have been no less guilty than the Pharisees generally.

46. See note on Matt. xxiii. 4.

47—51. See notes on Matt. xxiii. 29—6.

47. *For ye build the sepulchres, &c.* 'We are not to understand this as though any part of their guilt lay in building or adorning the tombs of the prophets, considered in itself; but in their falseness, in giving this testimony of respect to the prophets, whilst they were actuated by the spirit, and following the example, of their persecutors and murderers; inasmuch that they appeared to erect those sepulchres, not to do honor to God's prophets, but to serve as eternal monuments of the success of their progenitors in destroying them.'—*Campbell*. This exposition is confirmed by the succeeding verse, which represents the fathers and sons as jointly engaged in the ungodly work; the murder of the prophets and the erection of their monuments being described as one continuous transaction. By thus perpetuating the memory of iniquity, and laboring in the same cause, the sons gave evidence that they allowed or approved the deeds of their fathers.

49. *Wisdom of God*. The most obvious meaning would seem to be, that divine wisdom which spake through the ancient prophets, foreshowing future events. 2 Pet. i. 21. But there is a material difficulty in this interpretation; namely, no corresponding prediction is

found in the Old Testament. Hence some suppose that Jesus quoted from an ancient prophecy now lost. But this is a mere conjecture. Others think he intended himself, by the *wisdom of God*. "By the wisdom of God, here, is undoubtedly meant the Saviour himself."—*Barnes*. He cites John i. 1, 1 Cor. i. 30, and Col. i. 13—18, in justification of this exposition. But in neither of those places is Jesus called the "wisdom of God," nor can I perceive their applicability to this case. In 1 Cor. i. 24, it is indeed said that Jesus is preached as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" to both Jews and Greeks. But even this case is not parallel; for wisdom is not here personified, as it is supposed to be in the text. The great objection, however, to this theory is, that Jesus was not accustomed thus to speak of himself. He generally used terms, in speaking figuratively of himself, which were familiar to Jewish ears, as applicable to the Messiah, or, when he used other terms, so qualified or explained them, that their application to himself was manifest. If he meant himself by the *wisdom of God*, this is a solitary case of the kind, and without any of the usual signs of applicability. The difficulty attending the supposition, that the *wisdom of God* here means Jesus, is partly avoided by those who understand the language, not as our Lord's, but as the evangelist's. "These seem to be Luke's words, and to mean, that Jesus, the wisdom of God, (as he is called in 1 Cor. i. 24,) added the words which follow here, on that occasion; and this interpretation of these words is agreeable to that of Matthew, who makes Jesus speak in his own person. Behold, I send unto you prophets, &c. Matt. xxiii. 34."—*Pearce*. The objec-

51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily, I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things

tion, however, remains, that this is an unusual personification, and not in accordance with the general style of Luke. Another interpretation appears so easy and obvious, that it seems singular so few have adopted it. It is suggested as follows: "This form of speaking agreeth well enough with that so much in use, 'the rule of judgment saith.' Amongst numberless instances, take that of the Targumist; 'Is it fitting that the daughters of Israel should eat the fruit of their own womb? The rule of judgment [*retributive justice*] answered and said, Was it also fitting to kill a priest and a prophet in the sanctuary of the Lord, as ye killed Zacharias,' &c."—*Lightfoot*. The interpretation thus hinted, but not further illustrated by *Lightfoot*, is this: The language is to be understood wholly as uttered by our Lord. And by this peculiar phraseology, he conveyed the idea, that his language was prophetic, that it was truly divine wisdom, or the truth inspired by the Holy Ghost. A similar form of expression is used by Luke in recording the language of Agabus, addressed to Paul: "Thus, saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." Acts xxi. 11. It may be objected, that the use of the imperfect tense in the text is inconsistent with this interpretation; "therefore also *said* the wisdom of God." But this objection bears equally against the theory that Jesus used these words to indicate himself. And, moreover, it should be observed, that the word here used is in the aorist tense, which is proverbially indefinite, and is certainly susceptible of a *present* signification. Accordingly Campbell translates, "thus *saith* the wisdom of God."

unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things;

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

## CHAPTER XII.

**I**N the mean time, when there were gathered together an in-

52. *Key of knowledge*. Matthew says, "ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men." The metaphor is taken, in both cases, from a door locked to prevent access. A key is the instrument by which the bolt of a lock is withdrawn. By taking away the key of knowledge, is intended, that the lawyers withheld from the people the means of acquiring true knowledge and entering into the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven. The particular allusion is correctly expressed thus; "By their false interpretation of the Old Testament, they had taken away the true key of understanding it. 'You endeavor to prevent the people also from understanding the scriptures respecting the Messiah; and those who were coming to me ye hindered.' If there be any sin of peculiar magnitude, it is that of keeping the people in ignorance."—*Barnes*. For another method of preventing men from entering the kingdom, see note on Matt. xxiii. 13.

53. *Urge him vehemently, &c.* They were provoked at his reproofs, and determined, if possible, to obtain some advantage over him. They therefore pressed him with questions; they proposed questions in rapid succession, hoping that, in the hurry of the moment, he would use some expression which might be tortured into an accusation against him.

54. *Laying wait, &c.* As they found open and manly opposition unavailing, they endeavored by stratagem to accomplish their purpose. They attempted to ensnare him by their questions, and to entangle him in conversation, so that they might accuse him before the Sanhedrim, and procure his condemnation.

## CHAPTER XII.

1. *In the mean time*. That is. while Jesus was in the house of the Pharisee,

numerable multitude of people, in-  
somuch that they trode one upon  
another, he began to say unto his  
disciples first of all, Beware ye of  
the leaven of the Pharisees, which  
is hypocrisy.

2 For there is nothing covered,  
that shall not be revealed; neither  
hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore, whatsoever ye have  
spoken in darkness, shall be heard  
in the light; and that which ye  
have spoken in the ear in closets,  
shall be proclaimed upon the house-  
tops.

4 And I say unto you, my  
friends, Be not afraid of them that  
kill the body, and after that have  
no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom  
ye shall fear: Fear him, which,  
after he hath killed, hath power to  
cast into hell; yea, I say unto you,  
Fear him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for  
two farthings, and not one of them  
is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of  
your head are all numbered. Fear

as narrated in the preceding chapter.  
¶ *Innumerable multitude.* Literally,  
myriads, or tens of thousands. The  
meaning is, a very great number. It  
was characteristic of our Lord's minis-  
try, that the people surrounded him in  
throngs. Even those who did not be-  
lieve on him, as the Messiah, manifest-  
ed a strong desire to hear him. He was  
sometimes obliged to escape from them  
secretly, that he might enjoy a brief  
period of private intercourse with his  
chosen disciples or communion with his  
God. ¶ *First of all, beware, &c.*  
"Above all things, beware," &c.—  
*Campbell.* They were to be particularly  
on their guard against hypocrisy. As a  
little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,  
so hypocrisy pervades the heart, until  
the better feelings and emotions are  
overcome. ¶ *Leaven of the Pharisees.*  
See note on Matt. xvi. 6. In this place,  
instead of the doctrines of this sect gen-  
erally, our Lord specifies a single trait in  
their character, which he would have

not therefore: ye are of more value  
than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, Whoso-  
ever shall confess me before men,  
him shall the Son of man also con-  
fess before the angels of God.

9 But he that denieth me before  
men, shall be denied before the an-  
gels of God.

10 And whosoever shall speak a  
word against the Son of man, it  
shall be forgiven him: but unto  
him that blasphemeth against the  
Holy Ghost, it shall not be for-  
given.

11 And when they bring you  
unto the synagogues, and unto  
magistrates, and powers, take ye  
no thought how or what thing ye  
shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall  
teach you in the same hour what  
ye ought to say.

13 ¶ And one of the company  
said unto him, Master, speak to my  
brother, that he divide the inherit-  
ance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man,

his disciples especially avoid. It was a  
distinguishing characteristic, as is evi-  
dent from Matt. ch. xxiii.

2—9. See notes on Matt. x. 26—32.

10. See notes on Matt. xii. 31, 32.  
See also Mark iii. 28—30.

11, 12. See notes on Matt. x. 17—20.

13. *Speak to my brother.* It seems  
the two brethren had disputed concern-  
ing their inheritance, or the property  
which they inherited from their parent.  
Each desired more than the other was  
willing to grant: and they could not  
make an amicable division.

14. *Who made me a judge, &c.*  
Our Lord declined acting as a civil  
magistrate, or interfering with the de-  
tails of human transactions. He dealt  
only with general principles. He ex-  
hibited and illustrated the great funda-  
mental principles of duty towards God  
and towards man. But whenever he  
was requested to act as a judge in spe-  
cial cases, he declined, lest he should  
give offence to them who were in au

who made me a judge, or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

thority, afford his adversaries occasion for an accusation, or appear to be assuming an authority which did not belong to him as a religious teacher. Matt. xxii. 15—22; John viii. 3—11. Moreover, had he indulged the requests of such applicants and undertaken to settle private controversies, he would have been materially hindered in the prosecution of his great work,—a work vastly more important. But he freely taught those great general truths, which, when properly applied, would end all controversies among men, and all opposition to God. And in this particular case, while he declined officiating as a judge, he imparted a moral lesson which would naturally abate the violence of the controversy, and lead to a peaceable adjustment.

15. *He said unto them.* Perhaps he particularly addressed the two contending brethren. If so, his language was a direct reproof of their controversy, which was occasioned solely by love of money. But, doubtless, his remarks were uttered publicly, that the by-standers might receive profit, and see the folly of placing their affections too strongly on earthly possessions. ¶ *Covetousness.* The word here used occurs several times, and is uniformly translated covetousness, except in Eph. iv. 19, where it is rendered *greediness*. This word is sometimes used in conversation, in the sense of niggardliness, or stinginess; indicating an unwillingness to part with any portion of one's possessions. But this is not the true sense of the term. It indicates an eager, insatiable desire of obtaining more; a desire of acquiring rather than of retaining; between which desires there is a very considerable difference. A covetous man *may* be generous,—though this combination is not often witnessed. But the simple idea necessarily embraced in the term covetousness, is a strong desire to obtain additional possessions, and has relation to the goods of others, not to one's own. See Exo.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to be-

xx. 17; Micah ii. 2; Acts xx. 33; 1 Tim. vi. 10. ¶ *For a man's life consisteth not, &c.* That is, happiness and life itself depend not upon an abundance of riches. This is given as a reason why men should not be covetous or inordinately greedy of vast possessions. To the persons directly addressed, this was an intimation that their contention was foolish; if one might retain or acquire an undue proportion of the inheritance, it would not essentially benefit him; because his life and happiness depended not on that, but on something else. To all who heard, a lesson was given, of the vanity of earthly riches, and the folly of relying on them as the chief good.

16. *Spake a parable, &c.* We shall the better understand this parable, by noticing the precise point which it was designed to illustrate; namely, that life and happiness do not depend on the possession of riches. It shows the folly of covetousness indirectly; but not directly. The admonition was, "beware of covetousness;" the reason on which it was founded was, "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" and the parable is evidently intended to illustrate this reason, not the admonition; for it does not appear that the man in the parable was covetous, or that his possessions were the fruit of covetousness; but he *had* such possessions as others coveted, the fruit of his own fields which produced plentifully; and these possessions availed him nothing, because he did not live to enjoy them. This is the true point of the parable. Though he had more than he could well take care of, it did not prolong his life; and this is a universal truth. For this reason, men should avoid covetousness, or a violent passion for riches.

17. So abundant was the increase of his fields, that his barns and store-houses would not contain all the fruits. There are inconveniences attending

stow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

riches, as well as poverty. The poor man is sometimes troubled to obtain what he needs ; the rich man, to know how to dispose of what he has. The prayer of Agur should be upon the lips and in the hearts of all : " Give me neither poverty nor riches." Prov. xxx. 8.

18. As the best method to accomplish the desired result, he determined to construct new granaries of a larger size. The word rendered barns means simply a garner, granary, or a depository for the fruits of the earth. Rosenmüller says these were " subterranean caverns, in which the Orientals were accustomed to preserve their grain, wine, and oil." Instead of erecting barns, like those of modern times, they found or constructed caves in the earth, which they appropriated to the preservation of their provisions. This will account for what has to many seemed very singular in the conduct of the man in the parable ; namely, that he did not let his barns stand, and either make the necessary additions, or erect another. It was less expensive to take down the wall of a cave, and enlarge it, than to dig a new one ; so that his conduct was natural. ¶ *Fruits.* This word is not now generally applied to all sorts of grain, and to all the productions of the earth ; but this is the meaning of the original, and the English word was formerly used in this sense.

19. This whole soliloquy plainly indicates the man's reliance on worldly possessions as the chief good. He had enough of these, and he designed to spend the remainder of life in ease and luxury. He proposed to himself no higher enjoyment than to eat, drink, and be merry. But his riches did not prolong his life, nor afford him the pitiful enjoyment he anticipated. Many have been doomed to a similar disappointment. They have toiled more severely than this man appears to have done,

20 But God said unto him, *Thou fool*, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 ¶ And he said unto his dis-

have obtained their property by more unrighteous means,—for his was the fruitful product of his own fields,—have denied themselves many comforts, and at last have attained the summit of their hopes ; when, just as they supposed themselves ready to begin to enjoy life, they have ceased to live on the earth.

20. *Thou fool.* The folly of this man,—and it was most egregious folly,—consisted in placing all his hopes and all his reliance on perishable riches. He had not stored his heart with spiritual riches, which endure forever, brightening the path of life, and cheering the hour of death with hopes of another and happier existence. He trusted in earthly possessions ; these he would eat and drink ; he would indulge himself in merriment. This he foolishly imagined would yield permanent happiness. ¶ *This night thy soul shall be required of thee.* Briefly, this night thou shalt die. This is not an unusual periphrasis. ¶ *Then whose, &c.* Whether a wise man or a fool should inherit these treasures, it is clear they were of no further advantage to their former owner. He was separated entirely from them, and they were no longer his. He had no power to enjoy them.

21. *So is he, &c.* Here is the application of the parable. Earthly riches cannot be regarded as a source of permanent enjoyment ; for even overgrown wealth will not shield its possessor from death. All who are unduly anxious to amass wealth should remember that this alone will not be sufficient for them, even if they obtain it. The rich man died, and so will they ; and they, like him, must leave their wealth behind them, and no more enjoy it. This fact our Lord enforced on the attention of his hearers, by this parable, to induce them to regard his admonition, *beware of covetousness*, or be not too eager in pursuit of riches. ¶ *Not rich toward God.* Destitute of spiritual riches or

ciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which neither have store-house, nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow. They toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field,

of heavenly treasures. For the different nature and value of earthly and heavenly treasures, see notes on Matt. vi. 19—21.

29—31. See notes on Matt. vi. 25—33.

32. *Little flock.* Our Lord often represents his disciples as sheep, and himself as the shepherd,—a figure of speech peculiarly impressive in a country where so much attention was devoted to the rearing of sheep, and the duties and qualities of a good shepherd were so well understood. This flock was now small, and exposed to “ravening wolves.” As to temporal possessions, beyond the charitable supply of their daily wants, they had little to expect. But notwithstanding their poverty, the Master exhorted them to trust in the God who fed the ravens and clothed the grass. Above all, he exhorted them to seek the kingdom of God, ver. 31, and his righteousness, Matt. vi. 33, and all necessary temporal blessings should be added. In this verse, he announced that it was God’s pleasure to give them the kingdom; therefore they might banish fear; for their heavenly Father was greater than all, and none had power to pluck them

and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 ¶ But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

out of his hand. John x. 29. Their inheritance in the kingdom was beyond all possible doubt. ¶ *To give you the kingdom.* That is, the kingdom of God, ver. 31, and Matt. vi. 33. From the reference to the approach of this kingdom, and the glorious manifestation of its King, in the subsequent verses, it is evident that our Lord referred to the same kingdom mentioned in Matt. iii. 2. See note there.

33, 34. *Sell that ye have, &c.* Our Lord required those who would be his personal followers, to dispose of all earthly possessions, and distribute to the poor. For the peculiar circumstances which rendered such a requisition proper and necessary, at that time, see notes on Matt. xix. 21—24. ¶ *Bags which wax not old.* Bags or purses which do not grow old, or wear out. The allusion is to the purses attached to the girdles of the dress, or to the girdles themselves, which were often so made as to serve for purses, for carrying money, jewels, or other articles of small bulk and large value. But the phrase is here used figuratively; and, the purse being put for the treasure contained in it, the meaning is, secure those heavenly treasures, which can neither be destroy

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily, I say

ed or taken away. If you have these, you will be "rich toward God." ¶ *Where your treasure is, &c.* If they placed their affections on earthly treasures, and relied on them, they would be subject to bitter disappointment. Their only prudent course was rather to cultivate those virtues and graces which were befitting the kingdom of righteousness; for these alone were permanent treasures. Having these, they might possess their souls in patience, amid all the trials and outward difficulties in their path; and though bereft of all else, they would still be rich. See notes on Matt. vi. 19—21.

35. *Let your loins be girded about.* The Jewish dress consisted, in part, of a loose flowing robe, which was gathered around the loins by a girdle, when the individual was laboring or travelling. This whole verse is figurative, and its meaning is plainly indicated by what follows, in ver. 36. They were admonished to be ready, at any moment, to enter into the kingdom of heaven, when it should come with power. They were not to be cumbered by attachment to earthly goods, which should retard their progress in attaining heavenly treasures, or render them unwilling to abandon everything else for their sake. See notes on Matt. xvi. 24—23, where the same general subject is embraced, and the same coming of the Master mentioned.

36. Here the figure is dropped, and a distinct comparison made. As the Son of man should come at an unexpected hour, ver. 40, his disciples were exhorted to be in constant readiness, even as servants awaiting the return of their master from a feast. By this comparison, and another in ver. 39, the necessity of watchfulness was illustrated. It will be remembered that one part of the

unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and he will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he

disciples' duty, on the approach of their Lord in power and great glory, was to flee to the mountains; in such haste, too, that they must abandon even their clothing, if it were not at hand. See Matt. xxiv. 16—18. To do this readily, it was necessary that their affections should be thoroughly weaned from earthly possessions,—which was a prominent feature of this whole exhortation, induced, as it was, by the grasping desire of wealth narrated in ver. 13.

37—43. See notes on Matt. xxiv. 42—51, where the language is so very similar to this passage, that many have supposed the two to be parallel, and that Luke has introduced his narration out of the order of time. Be this as it may, there can be no question that the same subject is embraced in both passages.

37. *Shall gird himself, &c.* Servants always wore the girdle, when waiting at the table. The master of a house not unfrequently girded himself as a servant, when he provided a feast for his friends. Our Lord declared that, in like manner, he would wait on his disciples, and minister to them of those spiritual blessings which were provided in his kingdom. Such is the meaning of the figure here used. If the disciples would patiently endure the trials and privations which attended their profession of Christianity, and remain faithful and obedient unto the end, they should be preserved from destruction with unbelievers, and enter into the joy of their Lord, who would bestow on them blessings incomparably more valuable than all which they had lost.

38. *Second watch—third watch.* See note on Matt. xiv. 25.

39. *The thief would come.* The only point, in which our Lord's coming is



would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also : for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all ?

42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them* *their* portion of meat in due season ?

43 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his

compared with that of a thief, is that it would be unexpected ; at a time when men were not generally looking for it, or watchful in regard to it. The same comparison occurs several times. Matt. xxiv. 43 ; 1 Thess. v. 2, 4 ; 2 Pet. iii. 10 ; Rev. iii. 3 ; xvi. 15.

47, 43. *Stripes*. The Jews often punished by scourging. Deut. xxv. 1—3. The number of stripes might not exceed forty, at any one time. At a later period, the Jews, being scrupulous lest they should possibly exceed this number by an error in reckoning, inflicted only thirty-nine stripes. Thus Paul says, " of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one." 2 Cor. xi. 24. Punishment by scourging is here used to represent the retribution which will surely overtake all who are disobedient to the divine law. But a distinction is made between ignorant and wilful transgressors. Those who sin against light are more criminal, and shall be more severely punished, than those who ignorantly disobey the same commandments. And this is a righteous rule, which commends itself to every man's natural sense of justice. As the general subject here has relation to the coming of the Son of man, there seems to be a special reference to the aggra-

coming ; and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken ;

46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

49 ¶ I am come to send fire on

vated guilt of disciples, who had heard the word of truth, if they should prove disobedient. In this case, we must understand that such would suffer even more severely than the unbelieving Jews, at that dreadful season of calamity. The apostle seems to have had his eye upon this place, Heb. x. 26—39. But though primary reference may have been made to the early disciples, yet the rule is of universal application, and most obviously just. It has sometimes been alleged that a just retribution is not rendered on earth, because Christians, when they transgress, suffer much more severely than the ungodly, for the same transgression. Our Lord here assures us that such are more guilty, and deserve more severe punishment. What we witness, therefore, is precisely what we might expect under a righteous administration of justice ; and it furnishes direct evidence that a righteous retribution is rendered, instead of intimating the contrary. Those who know and feel their obligations must expect many stripes, when they transgress ; while those who do not know or do not feel those obligations may be proportionably punished by a less number.

49. *I am come to send fire, &c.* See note on Matt. x. 34, where a similar

the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law

against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

declaration is recorded. Jesus states the effect of his mission, or the consequences which would directly result from it. The evil hearts of men would rebel against the rule of righteousness. There would be division, contention, and ill-will. He did not come for the purpose of producing this state of things; for his gospel inculcates peace, and love, and harmony. But he knew that in the accomplishment of his great work, these evils must be encountered. The same idea is amplified in ver. 51—53.

50. *Baptism to be baptized with.* See note on Matt. xx. 22, 23. Jesus evidently refers here to the dreadful suffering which he knew he must endure. To this scene he constantly looked with the keenest sensibility; and some of his grievous temptations arose from instinctive dread of the agony which awaited him. See note on Matt. iv. 1—11. The meaning of this verse may be understood thus: I shall be the first victim of the fire which is kindled on earth by my preaching. The passions of men will be excited, their wrath inflamed, and they will wreak their vengeance first on me. I shall be mocked and insulted; persecuted and betrayed; spit upon, scourged, and crucified. I distinctly see that I am to be thus baptized by the fire of human wrath. And I look forward to that result with anxiety; for though willing to drink the cup which my Father hath prepared, to receive the baptism which he hath appointed, to endure all things

according to his will, yet my nerves quiver with apprehension, and I involuntarily shrink back from the horrible scene. "How am I pained, till it be accomplished."—*Campbell*. This expresses the sense of the word rendered *straitened*, as here used. It literally signifies to take hold of, or to hold. Jesus was holden in a painful position, so to speak, while he saw the dreadful trial approaching, and knew it could not be avoided, but must be endured. He was willing his disciples should know that his sensibilities were highly excited, so that his fortitude and endurance to the end might encourage them the more, and be unto them a more perfect example. For after the first fury of the fire should be expended upon him, he knew and he forewarned them that they would be exposed to its scorching heat. When therefore they should shrink back in dread, and tremble in prospect of suffering, he would have them know and remember that he had felt all this apprehension quite as keenly, and yet yielded himself a willing sacrifice, according to the divine will. Thus might they be encouraged to copy his example, and triumph over fear, and pain, and death, by the power of faith in the goodness of God.

51—53. See notes on Matt. x. 21, 22, 34—36. Having spoken of the opposition which should rage against him, Jesus assured his disciples that similar trials awaited them; they also would be hated and persecuted.

54—57 *He said also to the people*

58 ¶ When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, Thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Hitherto, from ver. 22, his discourse had been specially directed to his disciples. Taking occasion from the application made in ver. 13, to speak of the vanity of earthly possessions, and the necessity of more durable riches, ver. 15—21, he particularly cautioned his disciples to abandon all attachment to worldly goods, and to trust entirely in their Father's care, ver. 22—30; he then assured them of their inheritance in the kingdom, ver. 31, but impressed on them the necessity of being ready for its approach; declaring that, if they should be found unfaithful, they would deserve and receive a more severe punishment than others who had not enjoyed such advantages for knowing the truth; ver. 33—43. To guard them against the danger of backsliding, and to encourage them to a steady perseverance, he pointed out the trials which awaited both him and them, so that they might be influenced by his example; ver. 49—53. He then again addressed *the people* on the subject of the speedy manifestation of the Messiah in his kingdom. For an explanation of what follows, see notes on Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

53, 59. See notes on Matt. v. 25, 26. I do not perceive that these verses have any immediate connexion with the foregoing. They are introduced by Matthew at a different time, and in connexion with a different subject. Luke often departs from the order of time, and probably does so here. These verses "seem to have been spoken on another occasion, and to have a more proper place where they are found in Matt. v. 25, 26."—Pearce.

### CHAPTER XIII.

1. *Told him.* This event had occurred not long previously; it was dur-

### CHAPTER XIII.

**T**HERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

ing the administration of Pilate. But whether it was told to Jesus as a matter of news, as having just occurred, or whether it was mentioned to him to obtain his opinion concerning the character of Pilate, does not appear. The event itself is not mentioned by Josephus; but affrays and bloodshed were so frequent in that age, that this omission is by no means strange. ¶ *Galileans.* Inhabitants of Galilee. See note on Matt. ii. 22. They were strongly opposed to the Roman government, and often resisted by force. Very probably it was for mutinous language or conduct, that Pilate slew those who are here mentioned. ¶ *Whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.* Of course, not meaning that he offered their blood in sacrifice. The plain import of the language is, that while these Galileans were offering sacrifices, probably at Jerusalem, Pilate came upon them with an armed force, and slew them, even around the altar, so that their blood was mingled with what they were offering or had prepared for sacrifices.

2. *Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above, &c.* Jesus gave no opinion concerning the justice or injustice of Pilate's procedure. But he noticed a mistake prevalent among the Jews, as well as others, that those who endure great calamities must necessarily be sinners above others. When the calamities of men can be directly traced to their sinfulness, then it is prudent to regard their sinfulness as the cause of what they suffer; otherwise not. If a man become intoxicated, and fall, and break his limbs, we may safely say that his sufferings are occasioned by his sin. But if a man be assaulted and maimed by a villain, or if sickness and death invade his family, this alone does not

3 I tell you, Nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ?

5 I tell you, Nay ; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable : A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came

warrant the conclusion that he is extraordinarily sinful. In the case here mentioned, Pilate might or might not have had just cause for inflicting such a terrible punishment upon the Galileans. Jesus gives no opinion on this point. He makes no comparison between these and other Galileans ; but he impliedly compares them with the Jews, and expresses the opinion that a similar calamity awaited them, unless they should escape it by repentance, and a close attention and obedience to his word.

3. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* This translation is sufficiently literal ; only it should be observed that the word *likewise* here means not *also*, but *in like manner*. Such is the import of the original. Because the words *repent* and *perish* are here used, many honest Christians have vainly imagined that our Lord referred to a state of endless misery, which none could escape except by repentance. But it is cheering to find commentators so generally consenting to a true interpretation of the passage. Omitting others, I quote the remarks of one of the more recent :—" You shall all be destroyed in a similar manner. Here he had reference, no doubt, to the calamities that were coming upon them, when thousands of the people perished. Perhaps there was never any reproof more delicate, and yet more severe, than this. They came to him, believing that these men who had perished were peculiarly wicked. Jesus did not tell them that *they* were as bad as the Galileans, but he left them to infer it ; for if they did not repent, they must soon likewise be destroyed. This was remarkably ful-

and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ?

8 And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it :

9 And if it bear fruit, *well* : and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut

filled. Many of the Jews were slain in the temple ; many while offering sacrifice ; thousands perished in a way very similar to the Galileans."—*Barnes*. See Selections, sect. xlviii., where a similar interpretation is given by several critics.

4. *Or those eighteen.* Our Lord adds another instance of sudden and fatal calamity, which probably was then of recent occurrence, and fresh in the recollection of his hearers ; though of too little general importance, in that period of great events, to be noticed by Josephus. ¶ *The tower in Siloam.* There was a fountain in Jerusalem, called Siloam, and perhaps, as is usual, it may have given a name to a small section of the city in its immediate vicinity, within which this tower stood. When, or for what purpose, it was erected, or what occasioned its fall, is not known. The remainder of this verse is almost identical with part of ver. 2.

5. See note on ver. 3.

6—9. The object of this parable is very manifest. Our Lord had just assured the Jews repeatedly, that, unless they should soon repent, a terrible destruction would overtake them ; a destruction so disastrous in its effects, that the nation has not yet recovered from it, though nearly twenty centuries have elapsed. A short space only remained for them to turn from the evil of their ways, and escape destruction. The fig-tree obviously represents the Jewish nation, whose unfruitfulness in righteousness, and whose impending destruction, are vividly portrayed. The remainder of the parable may be chiefly regarded as its drapery, or imagery, not requiring particular application. Some

it down.

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 ¶ And behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto

of fruitful imagination, have entered minutely into particulars ; making the tree, the Jewish nation ; him who planted it, God ; the fruit sought, righteousness ; the three years of seeking it, the three years of our Lord's ministry ; the vine-dresser, Jesus ; the culture and enrichment of the earth, the gospel and the labors of Jesus and his apostles ; the year of respite, the period during which utter destruction was delayed. But it seems unnecessary to interpret so particularly. The great leading idea is the only point of actual importance ; and that is sufficiently obvious. ¶ *Vineyard*. A place for raising vines. Though the custom was unusual, it seems that fig-trees were sometimes planted in vineyards. ¶ *Cumbereth*. This means literally to overload. The idea here conveyed is, that the tree occupied room, and consumed the juices of the earth, to no good purpose. The ground bore a useless burden, and was prevented from yielding sustenance to more profitable plants. ¶ *Dig about*, &c. Carefully moving and enriching the earth near the roots of trees is beneficial to their growth and fruitfulness. ¶ *Cut it down*. Destroy it. The Jews are said to have been peculiarly unwilling to destroy fruit-trees. But barrenness for three successive years was regarded as sufficient evidence that no more fruit was to be expected, and the unfruitful tree was given up as of no further value. There may be an allusion to this fact, in the parable.

10. *Teaching in one of the synagogues*. Our Lord continued to unite with men in the public worship of God, and frequently availed himself of the permission granted, to address the people. See note on Luke iv. 16.

11. *Spirit of infirmity*. That is, she was infirm. The particular character of her infirmity is denoted by her being bowed down and unable to stand erect ;

her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her : and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, 'There are six days in which

probably a disease of the spine. "It is a common idiom among the Jews, to put *spirit* before any quality ascribed to a person, whether it be good or bad, mental or corporeal. Thus the spirit of fear, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of slumber, the spirit of jealousy, are used to express habitual fear, &c."—*Campbell*.

12. *Thou art loosed from thine infirmity*. That is, thou art healed ; thine infirmity is removed. It may be observed, that in this case the relief was granted without application on the part of the sufferer. Jesus called her to him, and performed the miracle in the sight of the people. It may be further observed, that in this case, as generally, there could be no doubt concerning the reality of the miracle. The woman had been infirm for eighteen years, ver. 16 ; yet she had not forsaken the synagogue, but resorted thither for public worship ; she was therefore well known to the people ; and they could not suppose that she would thus long stand and walk in such an inconvenient posture, unless compelled to do so by an actual infirmity. When they saw her resume an erect position, at the word and touch of Jesus, they could not doubt that a miracle had been wrought. The disease was evident ; the relief was instantaneous, and plainly not the result of natural means, but of superhuman power.

13. *Glorified God*. Praised God ; expressed her gratitude for the blessing conferred on her by his power in Jesus. It becomes all who are healed of dangerous or painful diseases, to bless God for his mercy, whatever means may have been used for their recovery ; for it is of his goodness that life is prolonged and health enjoyed, whether by ordinary or extraordinary means.

14. *With indignation*. Notwithstanding our Lord's miracles uniformly

men ought to work : in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite*, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

manifested a spirit of kindness, and promoted the happiness of mankind, it is observable that the Jewish rulers were indignant when they were wrought. They entertained such an envious and hostile disposition towards him, that they could not witness any transaction which tended to increase public confidence in him, without wrath and indignation. In this case, the ruler seems to have been too much awed, or impressed by the divine power exhibited, to vent his indignation upon Jesus; and he therefore began to upbraid the people who witnessed the miracle and were doubtless affected by it. ¶ *Had healed on the sabbath-day.* The Jews regarded ceremonies so much more highly than religion itself, that they were exasperated when Jesus violated the ceremonial observance of the sabbath, even by works of mercy.

15, 16. See notes on Matt. xii. 10—12. ¶ *Thou hypocrite.* You condemn me for an action, similar in kind to one which you habitually perform, and of as much more importance as man is better than a beast. You loose your oxen from confinement, and give them drink, on the sabbath, to relieve their thirst; and condemn me for making this woman free from the bonds of disease which have affected her for the space of eighteen years. ¶ *Satan hath bound.* See note on Mark, chap. v. “Disabled by her disorder, which was attributed, by the superstition of the times, to Satan, and thus spoken of by our Lord, who used the popular phraseology. If a brute should be taken care of on the sabbath-day, how much more should a daughter of Abraham, bound by Satan, as you believe,—bound, afflicted for

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

eighteen long years,—he set free on the sabbath? Thus his question rose to a climax.”—*Litermore.*

17. *Adversaries were ashamed.* Their charge of sabbath-breaking was shown to be so destitute of true foundation, and so inconsistent with their own practice, that the ruler of the synagogue and his associates were ashamed. They could neither deny nor account for the inconsistency so plainly pointed out. They were mortified by this public triumph which Jesus had obtained over them, especially as it was witnessed by the people over whom they were anxious to retain an ascendancy. ¶ *All the people rejoiced, &c.* The common people, while acting under the impulses of their own common sense and natural feelings, heard our Lord gladly; rejoiced in the glorious things that were done by him; and were ready to acknowledge him as a mighty prophet of God, if not the true Messiah. It was only when they were deceived by their artful and designing leaders, that they united in the cry, Crucify him, crucify him. And thus it is generally. The great mass of men, guided merely by common sense and the feelings of their hearts, mean well; are disposed to receive the truth and profit by it; and rejoice in whatever promotes the general welfare. But they are made to err by the leaders. Their minds are corrupted, and their judgment blinded, by leaders, whose ambitious desires or other improper motives induce them to put falsehood for truth, and evil for good. Isa. ix. 16. Under such unrighteous influence, the people are often deceived to their own ruin; and, by doing that which they are made to believe will be beneficial to

20 And again he said, Wherunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and

themselves, bring down upon their heads the most grievous calamities.

13—21. See notes on Matt. xiii. 31—33. See also Mark iv. 30—32.

22. *Went through the cities and villages, &c.* We have no definite knowledge what cities and villages are here referred to, nor at what particular period of our Lord's ministry these events occurred. The material point, however, is clear. Now, as at all other times, our Lord diligently improved every opportunity to instruct the people; for he taught, as he journeyed towards Jerusalem. He was instant in season, imparting those instructions, exhortations, admonitions, and warnings, which the condition of the people required.

23—30. See notes on Matt. vii. 13, 14, 21—23; viii. 11, 12. Whether or not these passages be a record of the same conversation, misplaced in the order of time by one of the evangelists, it is certain that the same figures are used, and the same ideas conveyed. An illustration of the one, therefore, will aid in understanding the other.

23. *Then said one unto him.* Some suppose this person to have proposed the question in good faith; others, that it was ironical, designed as an expression of scorn, on account of the fewness of our Lord's disciples; but this is a point of minor importance. ¶ *Are there few that be saved?* Some suppose this question to refer to the future life, and to mean, shall few only obtain endless happiness? Others suppose it to refer to a present salvation, and to mean, shall few only enter the kingdom of heaven on earth? In either case, the question was important, if proposed in good faith. Some, who understand it to relate to the future life, have strangely represented it as a foolish question, prompted by an idle curiosity;—as if it were of no possible consequence to any one, whether his friends and neighbors, or even the members of his own family,

journeying toward Jerusalem.

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 ¶ Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When once the Master of

shall worship God and enjoy his smiles hereafter, or whether they shall perpetually blaspheme his name in unutterable torments. Strange, that any one who acknowledges his duty to love others as himself, should judge it unbecoming to manifest any concern respecting their endless welfare, and brand all inquiries into that subject as foolish and an evidence of idle curiosity. It is not probable, however, that the question here has any relation to the future life. Men may be *saved* from many things besides endless misery. Salvation, though now generally used in a technical sense, to denote deliverance from sin, or, as others wrongly apply the term, from the punishment of sin, has application to many other subjects. The question, so far as we may judge from the answer, here has reference to a salvation to be enjoyed on earth, by entering the gospel kingdom; for the unhappy consequences of remaining out of that kingdom seem clearly to belong to the present life.

24. See notes on Matt. vii. 13, 14. ¶ *Strive.* The original word denotes earnest and active exertion; it is the same from which the English word *agony* is derived. ¶ *Not be able.* Because they made application too late, ver. 25, or because their conduct was such as to exclude them. When Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom, some entered into its enjoyments through the gate, which was then strait and difficult, namely, by renouncing their false opinions and corrupt practices, receiving the truth in simplicity, and practising righteousness. The remainder of the Jews, it pleased God to exclude from the kingdom until after the entrance of the Gentiles. This fact is illustrated in Rom. chap. xi. When the full time came for the destruction of the Jewish nation, the door of the kingdom was closed to them; and though, in their hour of extremity, many would gladly

the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

have sheltered themselves from the impending ruin, by joining the company of the disciples, it was then too late, and they were not able to enter the kingdom.

25—27. See an explanation of this passage in the notes on Matt. vii. 21—23. ¶ *Shut to the door.* The figure is taken from a householder, who, at proper times, closes and secures his doors; or perhaps rather from the closing of the doors, on festival occasions, after the entrance of the guests, to prevent the admission of intruders. The kingdom of heaven is sometimes represented as a feast, to which some were admitted, while others were excluded. See Selections, sect. xiii.

28, 29. These verses clearly intimate the general subject of our Lord's discourse. The gospel, or the kingdom of God, would be taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles, who should bring forth its proper fruits. Matt. xxi. 43. The Jews would lament and gnash their teeth with rage, when they should see the Gentiles partaking the blessings of Abraham, which they had regarded as exclusively their own. Almost the whole book of Acts is a commentary upon this truth. Nothing excited the indignation of the Jews so highly, as to hear the apostles speak of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles. That this passage has such reference to the admission of the Gentiles to the gospel kingdom, and the exclusion of the Jews, see notes on Matt. viii. 11, 12, and the remarks of Whitby, quoted in the note on Matt. xx. 16. See also Univ. Guide, p. 146.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And behold, there are last, which shall be first; and there are first, which shall be last.

31 ¶ The same day there came

30. *Behold, there are last, &c.* The same language, which seems to have been proverbial, is found in Matt. xx. 16, but, in a different sense, as is shown in the note on that place. It here has manifest reference to the fact, that though the gospel, or the kingdom of heaven, was first offered to the Jews, they should be the last to receive it; while the Gentiles, to whom it was offered last, should be the first to enter. Notwithstanding the earliest disciples were Jews, their number was small. The first considerable accessions to the Christian church were from among the Gentiles. Yet the Gentiles were not called, during the personal ministry of Jesus on the earth. He confined his labors to the Jewish people, and commanded his disciples to do likewise. Matt. x. 5, 6. It was not until after his resurrection, that he enlarged their commission, and commanded them to go into all the world, teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature; thus inviting the Gentiles into his kingdom. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15. Yet were the Gentiles the first to enter the kingdom; millions have feasted on its rich blessings; yet, even to this day, the Jews stand without. Blessed be God, an assurance is given that they shall not always be excluded. But when the fulness of time shall come, all Israel as well as the Gentiles shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. Rom. ch. xi.

31. *Came certain of the Pharisees, &c.* The message which they delivered was probable enough in itself. Herod had already killed John, a preacher of



certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence; for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go

righteousness; he was notoriously wicked, and capable of any enormity. If one of our Lord's disciples had made the suggestion, it would have appeared as a friendly warning of danger. But it came through a different channel. It came from one who was bitterly opposed to Jesus, envied his present popularity, feared his influence, and was exasperated by his searching and solemn rebukes for iniquity and hypocrisy. It cannot be supposed that he was anxious for our Lord's safety, or desirous to shield him from harm; nor that he made this intimation of danger, out of pure friendship. We must regard it rather as a threat, designed to intimidate Jesus, and induce him to cease from his labors which occasioned the Pharisees so much anxiety and indignation; as if he had said, Depart immediately, and trouble us no more; if you remain longer, it will be at your peril; for Herod, who rules here, will presently apprehend you, and put you to death, as a disturber of the peace. But he grossly mistook our Saviour's character. Danger did not affright him. He knew the trials which awaited him, and he was ready to meet them. He had a keen sensibility of suffering, and shuddered at the prospect before him; yet his faith in God triumphed over fear, and he pursued his path with unblenching fortitude. When the appointed hour came, the victim was ready, having voluntarily presented himself at Jerusalem, where sacrifices were appointed to be offered.

32. *Tell that fox.* Our Lord uses a descriptive epithet here, with reference to Herod's cunning and dissimulation. Wetstein describes him as "one who, like most of the princes and magistrates of his time, formed himself in resemblance of Tiberius, who valued no trait of his own mind more highly than his dissimulation. He was now an experienced fox, having held his government for thirty years, and sustaining the most opposite and various relations; of a vassal to Tiberius, a master over the Galileans, an ally to Sejanus, to his brothers Philip and Archelaus, and to the other Herod; whose tempers were very unlike among themselves,

ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

and very wide from his own." It has also been well observed, that "to impose this ignominious but agreeable name on Herod, is not contrary to the command, not to speak evil of the ruler of thy people; it being the office of a prophet, not to spare kings when they reprove their offences, Jer. i. 10. Christ therefore here uses his prophetic power, in giving this tyrant a name so suitable to his actions."—*Whitby*. ¶ *Cast out devils, and I do cures.* For the meaning of casting out devils, see note on Mark, chap. v. He would have Herod distinctly understand that he did not interfere in political concerns, but confined himself to the benevolent objects of his mission, doing good and healing diseases, both of body and mind; and therefore that he was not justly obnoxious to any punishment whatever. ¶ *To-day, and to-morrow, and the third day, &c.* Some, understanding this phrase literally, suppose that this message was sent by our Lord only three days before his crucifixion. But this seems unreasonable, because Jesus had not yet arrived at Jerusalem; indeed if he were, as it would seem, in the dominions of Herod, he was yet in Galilee. But it appears that he arrived at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem, at least six days before his crucifixion. John xii. 2. Others, more probably, understand the three days to indicate a short but indefinite time. He had more labor to perform, but should accomplish it soon. Within a few days, he would be ready to depart out of Herod's jurisdiction. ¶ *Perfected.* Of course not meaning that he should be made perfect, for he was not imperfect then: he was sinless, without spot, and unfeigned. Some suppose he referred to his crucifixion, as the event which would complete his work, and make perfect the development of his character. But I prefer the opinion of those who understand the meaning thus: in a short time, I shall have completed or made an end of my work in Galilee, and shall be ready to depart. To the same purpose Campbell translates the phrase, "my course will be completed;" that is, my work here will

33 Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth* gather her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. And verily, I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall

say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees,

be ended. The same word occurs, Acts xx. 24, where it is rendered *finish*.

33. *I must walk, &c.* I must remain at liberty and continue my labor, for a short time. ¶ *For it cannot be, &c.* Jesus knew that he should die at Jerusalem; of course, Herod could not kill him in Galilee. He referred also to a well known fact, that scarcely a true prophet had ever perished in Israel, except at Jerusalem. His declaration then was this: I shall continue steadily in the work assigned me; when I have accomplished my labor in Galilee, and not before, I shall go up to Jerusalem, and die there; that being the place where other prophets have been slaughtered, and where I know a similar fate awaits me.

31, 35. See notes on Matt. xxiii. 37—39. Matthew records this language, as spoken at Jerusalem. It discloses the compassionate nature of Jesus, who thus loved his enemies and desired their happiness. See also Luke xix. 41—44.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1. *One of the chief Pharisees.* Literally, one of the rulers of the Pharisees, or one of the ruling Pharisees; perhaps a member of the Sanhedrim. ¶ *To eat bread.* That is, to dine. ¶ *On the sabbath-day.* "The Jews' tables were generally better spread on that day than on any others, and that, as they themselves reckoned, upon the account of religion and piety."—*Light-foot*. It may be well, on the sabbath, to enjoy the temporal blessings of God

with thankfulness. It is not well, however, to be detained from the house of God, by feasting or preparations for feasting. ¶ *They watched him.* They probably watched, as at other times, hoping they should discover something for which they could accuse him. Luke xi. 54. Very possibly, the Pharisee invited him to his house for the purpose of entangling him in conversation, Matt. xxii. 15, or taking advantage of some unguarded word or action.

2. *A certain man before him.* This may have been a member of the Pharisee's family, or an invited guest; or he may have been brought thither for the express purpose of tempting Jesus to heal on the sabbath-day, which the Jews considered unlawful. They *watched*, whether he would do so. ¶ *Dropsy.* A disease characterized by the accumulation of water in the head, chest, or other parts, or the whole of the body; a painful and frequently fatal disease, always difficult and slow of cure. Its instantaneous removal, on this occasion, was obviously miraculous.

3. *Answering.* This word often means no more than commencing or renewing a conversation. We may however, understand it here in its usual sense, by supposing our Lord to have replied to the thoughts, rather than the words, of the bystanders. See Luke v. 22. ¶ *Is it lawful, &c.* Jesus knew the thoughts of his adversaries. He knew they designed to accuse him, if he should heal the sufferer. To close their mouths afterwards, he first proposed this question, which they dared not deny in direct terms.

saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go :

5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when

4. *They held their peace.* They were silent. They could not deny that works of mercy were justifiable on the sabbath. And as they did not deny it, when a direct appeal was made to them, they could not consistently accuse him of transgression, after the cure was effected. ¶ *Healed him.* Suddenly, instantaneously, miraculously.

5, 6. See notes on Matt. xii. 11; Luke xiii. 15, 16. By this argument, our Lord often silenced his adversaries, and put them to shame. Luke xiii. 17. They did not hesitate to relieve brutes; it was absurd that they should accuse him of sin, because he relieved suffering humanity. They saw the absurdity, and could not answer him again to these things; they could neither evade or gainsay the force of his argument. Their mortification must have been the greater, as many were present, ver. 7, among whom doubtless were some who were not accustomed to be thus silenced. Their pride must have been humbled, when their first stratagem against Jesus so signally failed; and they were obliged to admit, tacitly at least, that he was right and they were wrong.

7. *Parable.* Rather, a precept or instruction; a signification which this word sometimes bears. See note on Matt. xiii. 3. ¶ *Those which were bidden.* The invited guests; of whom there seems to have been a considerable number. ¶ *Chief rooms.* Campbell translates the phrase, "observing how eager the guests were to possess the higher places at table, he gave them this injunction." The word *prōtoklisia*, (πρωτοκλισία) here rendered *chief rooms*, literally denotes the first or principal reclining place. As the Jews re-

he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee com-

clined, instead of sitting, at the table, the idea is perfectly obvious. See note on Matt. xxiii. 6. It was a common fault of the scribes and Pharisees, though by no means exclusively theirs, to appropriate to themselves the most honorable stations, so far as they could. What follows, in ver. 8—11, though directly addressed to the scribes and Pharisees, contains an important lesson for all; we shall do well to heed it, and profit by it.

8. *Bidden.* Invited. ¶ *To a wedding.* Perhaps wedding may here be put for any feast; for on such occasions, it was usual to celebrate the joyful event by feasting, which sometimes continued for seven days. ¶ *Sit not down in the highest room.* "Do not occupy the highest place at table."—Campbell. See note on ver. 7. ¶ *A more honorable man.* One in higher office or station; one whom the master of the feast shall consider more worthy to occupy the higher place. The gospel, in one sense, places all men on a level; yet it recognizes those distinctions of rank, without which society cannot exist, and the courtesies to which men are entitled by their moral character or usefulness. Matt. xxii. 21; Rom. xiii. 7.

9. *Give this man place.* Allow him to occupy the place which you have appropriated to yourself; for he is more deserving of honor. ¶ *With shame.* The first argument to show the propriety of humility and modesty was drawn from the fact, that it must be mortifying to an ambitious man, to be degraded from a higher to a lower seat.

10. *Lowest room.* Lowest reclining place, or the place near the foot of the

eth, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher : then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy

friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind ;

14 And thou shalt be blessed : for they cannot recompense thee :

table. ¶ *Go up higher.* Take a place nearer the head ; a more honorable station. ¶ *Worship.* Honor, respect. Seeing the master of the house show you this attention, others will regard you as worthy of honor ; or, thus will the master of the house honor you in the presence of his guests. The second argument, by which Jesus commended humility, was drawn from the fact, that it is the surest means to acquire permanent honor.

11. *For whosoever exalteth himself, &c.* A universal truth is here stated. God humbleth the proud and lifeth up the humble. And there is a strong disposition manifested among men, to honor the meek, retiring, humble man, while they endeavor to abase the haughty, and to mortify the pride of those who exalt themselves.

12. The precept, contained in ver. 7—11, was addressed to the guests. What follows, in ver. 12—14, was spoken to the master of the feast. ¶ *Call not thy friends, &c.* This is not to be understood as a prohibition against treating friends, and kinsmen, and even rich neighbors, with affection and with customary civility. It is a common Hebraism, meaning that, for the reasons assigned, it was more proper to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. See note on Matt. ix. 13. Relatives and friends should not be neglected ; and neighbors should not be slighted, because they are rich, if otherwise deserving of respect. They should all be treated with kindness, courtesy, and generosity, according to our ability. But more good is accomplished, more generosity manifested, and a more pure desire exhibited for the general happiness of mankind, by feeding the poor, the infirm, and distressed, than by feasting those who are able, not only to support themselves, but to feast us in return. It is therefore more con-

sistent with the spirit of the gospel, and more becoming a servant of Christ, to bestow favors on the poor than on the rich.

13. *The poor.* Those who are destitute of the necessities of life. ¶ *Maimed.* Having lost any member of the body.

14. *Thou shalt be blessed.* Men are blessed, or happy, in the act of doing good. See James i. 25. The benevolent emotions which prompt us to relieve the distresses of others are a blessing ; and the reflection that others have been made happy by our instrumentality is a blessing. In the latter clause of the verse, an additional blessing seems to be indicated. ¶ *They cannot recompense thee.* That is, they cannot recompense thee, as the rich do, by inviting thee to feasts, in their turn. And for this very reason it is, that favors bestowed on them are to be regarded as acts of true charity and kindness. ¶ *Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* This has been generally understood by expositors, as a promise of reward in the future life, at or subsequent to the proper resurrection of the dead. But to this exposition there are several objections, which are entitled to serious consideration. (1.) It is the plain doctrine of the scriptures that virtue is rewarded and vice punished here ; that the way of transgression is hard, and the way of wisdom or religion is pleasant ; that a recompense is rendered on the earth to both righteous and wicked ; in short, that all, even in the present life, are rewarded according to their works. Prov. iii. 17 ; xi. 31 ; xiii. 15 ; Matt. xvi. 27, 28 ; Gal. vi. 8. (2.) No well informed Christian pretends to *claim* the happiness of heaven, as his just *due* for services rendered ; but all acknowledge that they are unprofitable servants ; that they have done no more than their

for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

duty, Luke xvii. 10; that, on the other hand, they need forgiveness for their sins; and that, if saved at all, they must be saved by divine grace, manifested in Christ Jesus our Lord. Such I understand to be the feeling of every true Christian. And, feeling thus, I see not how any one can consistently expect to be recompensed in the future life for showing kindness to the poor in the present life, bestowing on them a part and only a part of what God has bountifully given to him; especially when every one must be conscious that he has done no more than his duty, and most have fallen far short of it. (3.) This kind of virtue, generosity to the poor and kindness to the distressed, is elsewhere referred to, and a peculiar reward described, in terms bearing a general resemblance to this passage, yet evidently not referring to the future life. Comp. Matt. xvi. 27, 28, with xxv. 31—40; and see the notes. (4.) Our Lord nowhere else describes the transition from this to a future life, as the resurrection of the just; but that is described, either as the resurrection of the dead, or simply, the resurrection. It is difficult to assign any good reason for this deviation, if the same event were described. (5.) Whenever the resurrection of the dead, or the transition to a future life, is mentioned, nothing is said of a judgment, or rewards or punishments attending it. See Luke xx. 35, 36; 1 Cor. ch. xv; and note on John v. 23, 29. It would be contrary to his usual practice, then, if he here referred to a reward in the future life. (6.) The hearers of our Lord did not understand him to refer to the future life, as is evident from the exclamation of one of them, in ver. 15, and the remark of Jesus in regard to it, in ver. 16—24. Yet the scribes and Pharisees believed in a future existence; and, what is still more material to the present case, they are represented by Josephus as believing in a proper resurrection of the just, but in the final misery of the unjust without a resurrection. Antiq. B. xviii., ch. i., § 3; J. Wars, B. ii., ch. viii., § 14. See note on Matt. iii. 7. But notwithstanding they believed the just should enjoy so great a advantage over the unjust, in the future life, they evidently did not understand our Lord to speak of that life, or its blessings, in this place; they rather

understood, by the resurrection of the just, the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, or the blessings attending it. Such are some of the difficulties attending the common interpretation; and they are not easily removed.

The true meaning of this passage may be understood, by comparing it with Isa. lxxv. 17—25; lxvi. 20—24; Dan. xii. 1—3; Mal. iii. 16—18; iv. 1—6; Matt. xiii. 40—43; xvi. 27, 28; Luke xxi. 23—33. The ancient prophets predicted that, on the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, a manifest distinction should be made between the wicked and the just or the righteous; that the wicked should be punished and the just rewarded. A peculiar exaltation, or lifting up, or deliverance, which is the primary meaning of resurrection, is indicated as the portion of the righteous, at that period. And our Lord taught the same doctrine. The redemption of his true disciples was to be accomplished when he came to establish his kingdom; and then were they to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. To this blessedness of his followers I suppose Jesus to have referred, by the resurrection of the just. And this supposition is confirmed by the fact, that what he required the Pharisees to do, in order to share that blessedness, was precisely what, at other times, he required others to do, in order to enter his kingdom, or to partake in the benefits of the Messiah's reign. For example; he required the rich young man to bestow his possessions on the poor, if he would obtain eternal life, or, as he subsequently explained the phrase, enter into the kingdom of heaven. And he assured his disciples, who had already forsaken all, that they should be abundantly rewarded, when the Son of man should sit on his throne; in other words, when his kingdom should be established in power and great glory. See Matt. xix. 16—30, and the notes. It should be remembered, that the two grand and fundamental laws of this kingdom require supreme love to God and universal love to men. The requisition here is, that the second great commandment be obeyed. When men feed the rich, and bestow favors on them who are able to repay them in kind, no true benevolence is displayed; but it is characteristic of pure love to

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him,

others, to feed the hungry and relieve the destitute and distressed, as here required; and such love was indispensable to admission into the gospel kingdom. It is needless to quote examples, in proof of this fact; for it stands out prominently almost everywhere in our Lord's instructions.

It may be objected, that *the resurrection of the just* is an unusual phrase to describe the events consequent upon the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. It is not denied that the word *anastasis*, (ἀνάστασις,) here rendered *resurrection*, is generally applied to the transition from the present to a future life; "yet this is neither the only, nor the primitive, import of the word. It denotes simply being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state, after an interruption. — Agreeably therefore to the original import, rising from a seat is properly termed *anastasis*; so is awaking out of sleep, or promotion from an inferior condition. The word occurs in this last sense, Luke ii. 34." — *Campbell*. See note on Luke xv. 18. In this definition of the word, most lexicographers substantially agree. And, in this sense, the term is not inappropriately applied to those events which are so glowingly and in such highly figurative terms described by the prophets, and by our Lord, in the places before referred to. It might well be called a resurrection of the just or righteous, when their redemption should come, and they should shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. Matt. xiii. 40—43; Luke xxi. 28—33. But whether or not the phrase was unusual, the Jews evidently understood Jesus to refer to the Messiah's kingdom, by the *resurrection of the just*; see ver. 15; and, in the parable which follows, ver. 16—24, he confirmed them in the belief that they understood him correctly, so far as the *subject* of conversation was concerned. The additional instructions, ver. 25—33, relate to the same general subject, and afford still further evidence of the same fact.

15. *Eat bread*. A common Jewish phrase for partaking of a feast, or of an ordinary meal. The figure used here,

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he unto him, A

to denote a participation in the blessings of the kingdom of God, was doubtless suggested, at this time, by the fact, that the guests were reclining at the table of the ruling Pharisee. ¶ *In the kingdom of God*. That is, in the Messiah's reign, often so denominated, both by Jesus, and by the Jews themselves. "It appears from the ensuing parable, that the kingdom of God here doth not signify the kingdom of *heaven* in the highest sense, but only the kingdom of the Messiah, of which the carnal Jew here speaks, according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should lord it over the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all temporal blessings and delights, in which they placed their happiness." — *Whitby*. *Campbell* translates, "the reign of God;" and adds this note:—"The English Translation makes, to appearance, the word here refer solely to the future state of the saints in heaven. This version makes it relate to those who should be upon the earth in the reign of the Messiah. My reasons for preferring the latter are these: (1.) This way of speaking of the happiness of the Messiah's administration suits entirely the hopes and wishes which seem to have been long entertained by the nation concerning it. See Luke x. 23, 24; Matt. xiii. 10, 11. (2.) The parable which, in answer to the remark, was spoken by our Lord, is on all hands understood to represent the Christian dispensation. (3.) The obvious intention of that parable is to insinuate, that in consequence of the prejudices, which, from notions of secular felicity and grandeur, the nation in general entertained, on that subject, what in prospect they fancied so blessed a period, would, when present, be exceedingly neglected and despised; and in this view nothing could be more apposite; whereas, there appears no appositeness in the parable, on the other interpretation."

16—24. This parable is almost precisely the same as that in Matt. xxii. 1—14, except that Luke omits what Matthew relates concerning the guest who was destitute of the wedding-gar-

certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

ment. The leading idea of the parable is, that the Jews, on frivolous pretences, would reject the gospel, or the kingdom of God as it is termed Matt. xxi. 43, which should thereupon be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth its appropriate fruits, namely, the Gentiles. The imagery, like the previous remarks, is drawn from the feast at which the parties were sitting, and need not be very strictly interpreted. The main idea is all which materially concerns us; and this is so obvious, that the parable "is on all hands understood to represent the Christian dispensation."—*Campbell*. Or, more particularly, "the meaning of the parable is this: the leaders among the Jews rejecting the doctrine of Jesus, he called upon the common people, and they not coming in any sufficient number, the Gentiles were afterwards called in, to supply the room which the absence of those others had made. See Rom. xi. 11, 12, &c."—*Pearce*. To the same effect, Whitty and others. See *Selections*, sect. xxxiv.

16. *A great supper*. Matthew calls it a wedding feast, or dinner. The general idea is the same; namely, he prepared a feast for his invited guests.

17. See note on Matt. xxii. 3.

18. *All with one consent*. There is no word in the original, answering to *consent*. The translators were unfortunate in their choice of a word to supply what they considered to be the sense. The phrase, as it stands, intimates that there was some concert of action among those who refused to accept the invitation, which does not otherwise appear to have been the fact. *Campbell's* version is more judicious, and more accurately expresses the meaning of the original: "they all, without exception,

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife: and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes

made excuses." ¶ *I must needs go and see it*. It is necessary that I should go and see it; intimating either that he had purchased conditionally, and must examine whether it were worth the price, or that he was so much pleased with his bargain, that he had rather forego the feast, than delay looking upon his purchase.

19. *I go to prove them*. To try whether they are valuable and serviceable. This, as the former, was a trifling excuse.

20. *I cannot come*. Perhaps no peculiar emphasis is designed here; yet it may be remarked, that he who had purchased a farm and he who desired to prove his oxen preserved an appearance of politeness, and requested to be excused; while this man, having married a wife, positively refused the invitation, and bluntly said, I cannot come. On such frivolous pretences, the Jews are represented as declining the blessing which Jesus offered them, in the kingdom he was about to establish. And on similar unsubstantial grounds do men now exclude themselves from the joys and consolations of the gospel. One is so much engrossed in business, that he has no time to devote to the acquisition of truth, or the cultivation of his heart. Another is so much attached to the riches and honors of this world, that he will remain a stranger to truth and religion, rather than hazard the loss of his idol. Others still are wholly controlled by the influence of their relatives and friends; and, though well disposed to partake of the bread of life and the water of life, they dare not do it; but saying, I cannot come, they subsist as they may, by feeding on husks.

21. See notes on Matt. xxii. 7—9

of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

22. *Yet there is room.* It was not enough, that a few of the common people among the Jews acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and entered into his kingdom. There was room also for the Gentiles, who were invited, and who gladly accepted the invitation. So of all the spiritual blessings of God. There is room in his house for all. There are provisions for all. What he bestows on them does not impoverish himself; but from everlasting to everlasting he is rich in grace, and his mercies never fail.

23. See notes on Matt. xxii. 9, 10. ¶ *Compel them.* "That is, by arguments of persuasion, not by force. The nature of the parable shows this plainly; it being a feast to which they were invited. And in the sense which I have given here, the word is used by Matthew, xiv. 22, and Mark, vi. 45, in both which places, when Jesus is said to *constrain* his disciples to get into the ship, nothing but his commanding or persuading them to do it can be reasonably understood. See also Gal. ii. 14."—*Pearce*. No argument can be drawn from this passage, in favor of compulsion in religious matters, or of restricting liberty of conscience. Error may be overcome by persuasion. Opposition may be conquered by argument. The heart may be compelled to submit by the power of love. But outward force is wholly unjustifiable.

21. *None of those men which were bidden, &c.* Those who had so unreasonably slighted his invitation should not be admitted. The kingdom of God was utterly taken away from the Jews, as a nation who had rejected and crucified the Messiah; and they were filled with madness, when they saw themselves excluded from the feast at which Gentiles from the four winds of heaven

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

sat down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. Luke xiii. 23, 29. But because the Jews failed to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, we are not to conclude that they shall never be saved from their sins. It was according to the divine purpose, that they should be blinded for a season, until the fulness of the Gentiles should be gathered. Then, the Jews living shall be converted to the faith of the gospel. And, eventually, every knee in heaven, earth, and elsewhere in the universe, shall bow in the name of Jesus, and confess him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father; Phil. ii. 10, 11; for he will have not only all Israel, but all men, to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. ii. 4, and Rom. ch. xi. On this parable generally, see Whittemore's Notes on Par. pp. 162—177.

25. *There went great multitudes with him.* That is, when he departed from the house of the Pharisee, at the close of the foregoing conversation. ¶ *And said unto them.* It will be perceived, that this address to the multitude was upon a subject similar to that of which our Lord had been speaking to the Pharisees; namely, the necessity of being willing to forsake or distribute all earthly possessions, and even to sacrifice the friendship of relatives and dear associates, in order to become true disciples and partakers of the blessings belonging to the kingdom of God.

26, 27. See notes on Matt. x. 37, 38. ¶ *Hate.* This word is not here to be understood literally; for the gospel prohibits us from cherishing hatred towards any one. It is absurd to suppose that our Lord required men to hate their parents and near relatives, in order to be true disciples, when he *most*



27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?

29 Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to

solemnly commanded them to love their enemies, in order to be characteristically the children of God. Matt. v. 43—48. The rule of the Jews was unreasonable enough,—to love their neighbors and hate their enemies; but still more absurd would be the rule, to love their enemies and hate their parents and nearest friends. The language of Matthew sufficiently explains this; the disciples were not to love their parents more than they loved their Master, lest they should be influenced to desert him; they were not to value their earthly possessions more than they loved him, lest they should backslide; they were not to love even their own lives more than they loved him and his cause, lest they should be turned aside from the path of duty, by the appearance of danger, and cowardly desert the standard of their leader. The following comparisons, ver. 23—33, are designed to illustrate the same truth.

23. *Build a tower.* See note on Matt. xxi. 33. Towers were formerly more common than now. They were erected for places of observation and defence. Since the invention of gunpowder, towers are comparatively useless for defence. ¶ *Sitteth not down first.* That is, delays the commencement of the work. ¶ *Counteth the cost.* Estimates the expense of finishing such a structure as he desires to erect. It is implied that he will not commence the work, if he be a prudent man, unless he is satisfied that he has *sufficient* to finish it.

29, 30. *Haply.* Perhaps; an old English word, not in frequent use. ¶ *Mock him.* Ridicule him; proclaim his folly, in attempting an enterprise which he had not the means to complete.

31. *Consulteth whether he be able,*

build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be

&c. The simple idea, without particular reference to numbers, is, whether he can successfully resist the forces which his adversary can array against him.

32. *An ambassage.* Messengers to treat in his name with his adversary. The title *ambassador* is still given to a certain class of persons who represent their own government in foreign countries.

33. *So likewise.* We have here the application of the five preceding verses. By these comparisons, Jesus designed to impress on the minds of them who would be his disciples, the necessity of seriously considering the dangers and difficulties which they must encounter; and now, as at other times, he admonished them not to profess discipleship, unless they were prepared to abide the consequences. He desired no disciples, except such as would endure unto the end. And he assured them of one thing in the outset: if they would be his disciples, or, in the phraseology of the former part of the chapter, if they would enter into the kingdom of God, they must *forsake all which they had*; that is, they must be willing to sacrifice the friendship of their relatives, and their earthly possessions. The peculiar state of things which rendered this caution necessary, at that time, is referred to in the notes on Matt. x. 34—38; xix. 23, 24. Under such circumstances, if they professed discipleship without a willingness to endure patiently the loss of all things, they would be liable to abandon the cause which they had embraced, and become subject to the derision of others, and the condemnation of their own consciences. Moreover, in that stormy period, his own cause could receive but doubtful benefit from such faint-hearted advocates.

of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 ¶ Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill ; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

True and honest disciples might be disheartened by the desertion of their associates ; and he did not wish to expose them to that peril. He therefore checked the forward zeal of the enthusiastic, and cautioned them not to profess discipleship, unless they loved him so much more than all things else, as to be willing for his sake to lose all possessions, and even seal their sincere devotion to his cause with their own blood. Though this admonition had special reference to the then existing state of things, it is worthy of the most serious consideration now. No man should profess to embrace religion, unless he is prepared to perform its duties faithfully and unshrinkingly, even though he be opposed, taunted, and ridiculed, by others. Loss of property and of life, under our mild and equitable laws, is not now to be apprehended. May God make us grateful for this blessing, and enable us to preserve it, and transmit it to our posterity.

34, 35. See notes on Matt. v. 13 ; Mark ix. 49, 50. "This excellently connects with the discourse preceding, thus : the gospel I require you to adhere to is that salt with which every oblation that is acceptable to God must be seasoned, Mark ix. 49, 50 ; the preachers of it are the salt of the earth, Matt. v. 13 ; as then salt, when it hath lost its savor, becomes good for nothing, but to be cast out into the dunghill, so the Christian professor, who lives not according to the prescripts of the gospel, can do no good to himself or others, and, if he fall off from  $\mathfrak{L}$ , can scarcely be recovered. Heb. v. 6 ; x. 17."—*Whitby*. ¶ *He that hath ears, &c.* See note on Matt. xi. 15. By this proverb, our Lord indicated that his language had application to his hearers in a figurative sense. They were to understand that they could not be disciples, unless they had within them such a spirit of love, and such faith in him, as would pre-

## CHAPTER XV.

**T**HEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

serve them from defection, even though called to forsake everything else and put their own lives in peril. They would otherwise be useless and unserviceable. In the hour of trial they would desert his standard ; they would neither sustain others, nor themselves be sustained. They would be rejected and cast aside as unprofitable servants ; and would have their portion with their unbelieving brethren.

## CHAPTER XV.

1. *Publicans and sinners.* See notes on Matt. v. 46 ; ix. 10, 11.

2. *Murmured.* Expressed dissatisfaction. They were scandalized that a person, reputed to be a prophet, and even supposed by some to be the true Messiah, should admit to his society the despised publicans and sinners. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, Luke xviii. 9 ; and they supposed that any true prophet, much more the Messiah would court their society, as the more respectable and suitable, and would hold no intercourse with the vicious and depraved. They considered it especially disgraceful to eat and drink with sinners ; and even intimated that a person who would suffer himself to be contaminated and disgraced by such society could not be a true prophet. See Luke vii. 39. The real source of dissatisfaction was, that Jesus did not confine his attention exclusively to themselves. If he had associated with them, flattered their vanity, praised their formal piety, and neglected and despised the lower classes, they would have been highly pleased. But as he denounced their hypocrisy and iniquity, and labored to convert sinners, they murmured.

3—7. See notes on Matt. xviii. 12, 13. The meaning of this parable is obvious, when the circumstance which drew it out is considered. The Pharisees alleged that it was improper for

3 ¶ And he spake this parable into them, saying,

4 What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it,

Jesus, if he were a prophet of God, or a religious teacher, to associate with sinners instead of devoting his whole attention to the pious, that is, to themselves. In this and the two following parables, he taught them, that, according to their own estimate of the characters of themselves and others, he was doing precisely what his duty, as a religious teacher, required. If they had never strayed from the path of righteousness, there was no necessity to bring them back: the lost and wandering were those whom he ought to seek, and restore to the true fold, ver. 3—7. If they had never been lost, they were safe now: it was his duty to seek and find what was lost, ver. 8—10. If they had never wandered from their father's house, they were now happy: it was his duty to seek the wandering and distressed prodigal, and persuade him to return to the abode of love, peace, and plenty, ver. 11—32. He was laboring, therefore, on behalf of those who most needed his assistance, and doing precisely what was consistent with his vocation. If any were as pure as the Pharisees pretended to be, they did not need his labors; but if others were as corrupt and abandoned as they represented, they certainly needed reformation and deliverance from their miserable state; and such aid it was his office to render. The idea running through these three parables is similar to that which Jesus expressed, when, in reply to the same accusation, he said, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Matt. ix. 12, 13; Mark ii. 17; Luke v. 31, 32. As in this declaration, so in the parables, the terms are not to be understood strictly, as if any were absolutely pure and holy, having no need of reformation; but Jesus reasoned with the Pharisees on their own principles, admitting them to be thus

he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one

pure; and upon this ground showed them, that his own conduct was proper, and their accusations groundless.

4. *A hundred sheep.* Large flocks of sheep were kept in Judea, under the care of shepherds. Frequent reference is made to this fact in the figurative language of the Bible. The imagery of this parable was very familiar to a Jewish mind. ¶ *Go after that which is lost.* The good shepherd manifests peculiar anxiety concerning that part of his flock which most needs his attention. If a sheep stray, he seeks for it, and does not petulantly abandon it to destruction. ¶ *Until he find it.* He searches diligently. His efforts for its restoration are not a mere form; but they are zealous and persevering. A shepherd's search must sometimes be ineffectual; yet Jesus represents it as resulting successfully. It is not unreasonable to suppose he intended to convey the idea, that his own labors should never fail of success; that he would persevere until his object should be fully accomplished.

5. *Layeth it on his shoulders.* When the good shepherd finds a sheep which had strayed from the flock, he does not treat it roughly; but in the most gentle and affectionate manner restores it to the flock. ¶ *Rejoicing.* Because he has rescued his sheep from the dangers and perils to which it had been exposed.

6. The language in this verse seems to be added, to give life to the parable, and make its meaning more vivid to a pastoral people, like the Jews. Very probably, shepherds were accustomed to congratulate each other, on such occasions.

7. *Likewise, &c.* Here is the application of the parable, recognizing a general principle of human nature; namely, that possessions, regained after a temporary loss, afford more pleasure than those which have been enjoyed without interruption. Thus the clear

sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her

sunshine appears more pleasant after a season of cloudy weather; health is enjoyed with a peculiar zest after sickness; the restoration of a friend from dangerous illness, or preservation in the midst of imminent peril, fills the heart with more throbbing joy than had been produced by former health and safety; property, lost and again found, acquires an additional value in our estimation. On the same principle, Jesus says the repentance and reformation of a sinner, and his restoration to purity, occasions more joy to good beings, than the continued purity of many. Or, as he doubtless intended to be understood by his hearers, the conversion of one of these sinners, whom you despise, and with whom you disdain to associate, is productive of more joy, than would arise from the unspotted purity of ninety-nine of your own number, even if you were as pure as you pretend to be. Why, then, should you accuse me of improper conduct, when I labor to produce such a blessed result? It should be added, that the conduct of the shepherd, in this parable, is represented as gentle and affectionate. He adopted no harsh measures. He did not attempt to terrify the lost sheep, when found, nor to drive it back into the fold, by menaces of instant destruction. But he tenderly aided and assisted it. So Jesus, the great shepherd of our souls, 1 Pet. ii. 25, manifested affection for sinners, while on earth; he exhibited the most ardent and sincere love to them and desire for their welfare, by giving his life for them. John x. 11, 15; xv. 13; Rom. v. 6—8. And by the power of that same love, he hath declared that he will draw, not drive, all men to himself. John xii. 32. Most admirably did he describe his own tender and compassionate nature, in the character which he drew of the good shepherd.

8—10. The same general principles

neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them

are illustrated in this, as in the foregoing parable. The argument accumulated strength, by this addition. In the former case, life was endangered; and even though it were brute life, yet common humanity might prompt to preserve it, and relieve the pains of the wanderer. In this case, mere property is named. And if this should be sought, and was sought earnestly, much more should suffering humanity be relieved and restored to happiness. It may be observed, in regard both to the sheep and the piece of money, that neither lost its intrinsic value, by being lost; it remained valuable and worthy of being sought; and its recovery afforded joy.

11—32. This is one of the most affecting and instructive parables ever uttered. It is true to life; and, besides its original application, which will be pointed out, it illustrates a course of life which many unfortunate young men have pursued. The miseries attending a life of sin are delineated by the hand of a master. And the joy which filled the old man's bosom, when his repentant son returned to his arms, is described by him who knew the human heart and its deepest emotions. The dark shades, which distinguish the portraiture of the elder son, not only represent the envious Pharisees, but they are strikingly descriptive of a class of men, which has not yet become extinct,—men who think their own happiness cannot be complete, if others share it; or, in other words, that they cannot be happy, unless others be miserable. The immediate design of this parable was similar to that of the two foregoing; namely, to justify the conduct of Jesus in showing kindness to sinners, even on the ground assumed by the Pharisees, that themselves were righteous and others wicked. But this parable presents an additional character upon the canvass, ver. 25—30; and, in the persons

said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his sub-

stance with riotous living. of the elder son, the envy and other unholy emotions of the Pharisees are embodied. If they had common discernment and common sensibility, they must have writhed under this scorching and withering rebuke. Much of the imagery in this parable is designed only to give animation and life to the picture, and needs not a particular application. For some excellent remarks on the folly of spiritualizing every incident in a parable, see a quotation from Campbell in the note on Matt. xiii. 3.

11. *A certain man had two sons.* This is not called a parable, though it evidently is such. The introduction, like Luke xvi. 19, seems like the commencement of a literal history of a particular case which had occurred; yet no one disputes that it is a parable, and nothing more. This remark may not be regarded as useless, when it is recollected that some have denied the propriety of considering any passage to be a parable, unless it be expressly so denominated by the sacred writers.

12. *Give me the portion, &c.* "It may seem strange that such a demand should be made, and that the parent should have acceded to it, when he knew that it was to minister to his debauches that his profligate son made the demand here specified. But the matter will appear plain, when it is considered that it has been an immemorial custom in the East, for sons to demand and receive their portions of the inheritance, during their father's lifetime; and the parent, however aware of the dissipated inclinations of the child, could not legally refuse to comply with the application."—*Clarke*. By this younger son, we are to understand the publicans and sinners, whose lost and ruined condition is represented by the course of the prodigal, until "he came to himself."

13. *Into a far country.* It is immaterial to what distance the young man travelled. The idea is, that he endea-

stance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

vored to escape the supervision of his father. Many young men have become impatient of parental restraint, and desirous of departing, that they might give unrestrained indulgence to their propensities. Little considering a parent's anxiety, and the value of his lessons of wisdom, they have vainly imagined that their highest happiness depended on their enjoyment of the largest liberty, and have departed not only from their father's house, but also from his counsels and the way in which he had instructed them to walk. ¶ *Wasted his substance in riotous living.* Not an unusual event in the life of a young man who mocketh at his father, and despiseth to give heed to his mother. Prov. xxx. 17.

14. *Mighty famine.* This figure is natural. The countries of the East are often visited by this scourge. It was a famine, which caused Jacob to descend into Egypt with his family. A severe famine was in Israel, in the days of Elijah, when it rained not for three years and six months. Famines are occasioned, sometimes by the failure of rain in its season, sometimes by untimely frosts, sometimes by blight or mildew, or by any cause which diminishes or utterly destroys the fruits of the earth, over a large extent of territory. The prodigal was ill-prepared for such a famine; for, while the means of sustenance were scarce and to be purchased only at a high price, his substance was wasted, and he had no means to buy. Other young men have also been reduced to want, by forgetting the prudential precepts and example of their parents, and living extravagantly, riotously, and wickedly.

15. *Joined himself, &c.* Became a servant to the citizen. He had been unwilling to be under the control of his father; he now became a servant to a stranger. He thus began to reap the reward of his folly. ¶ *To feed swine.* This, to the mind of a Jew, was the

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to him-

lowest depth of degradation. Swine were unclean, by the law, and the use of their flesh interdicted. Scarcely a more disgraceful occupation could be imagined, than that of a swineherd.

16. *He would fain.* Would willingly; he desired. ¶ *Husks.* This word with us denotes the outer covering of corn, in which there is very little nourishment. But the original signifies also "the fruit of the carob-tree, a tree very common in the Levant, and in the southern parts of Europe, as Spain and Italy. — This fruit still continues to be used for the same purpose, the feeding of swine. It is also called St. John's bread, from the opinion that the Baptist used it in the wilderness. It is the pod only which is eaten, which shows the propriety of the name, and of rendering it into English *husk*. Miller says, it is mealy and has a sweetish taste, and that it is eaten by the poorer sort, for it grows in the common hedges, and is of little account."—*Campbell*. ¶ *No man gave unto him.* It seems

he was not allowed to eat as much as he desired, even of this ordinary and perhaps disagreeable food; for although he would gladly have filled himself, no man gave to him. Probably, in such a season of famine, a particular portion might be allotted to the herd, and the herdsman also received his ration by measure, and was not permitted to rob the swine to satisfy his own hunger.

Thus far is illustrated the downward progress of many who depart from their earthly father's house, and plunge into dissipation and debauchery. This part of the parable also illustrates, and this is its chief design, the degradation and misery of those who slight the precepts of their heavenly Father, and wander into the wilderness of sin. Some have spoken in rapturous terms of the pleasures of sin, and have vainly imagined that, so far as the present life is concerned, sinners are much more happy than the virtuous. Not so did Jesus describe the path of transgression. He did not carpet it with roses. He did not conceal its thorns. He described it as it is, hard, and difficult; those who

self, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my fa-

travel in it are sorely wounded and distressed; they are reduced to the most abject misery. Thus he described the way and its travellers. And it was because sin made men so miserable, that he came to restore them to virtue and holiness. If the present fruit of sin were happiness, the parable would be both unnatural and destitute of force; but because it is misery, the parable is apt, and well designed to show the Pharisees the propriety of laboring to rescue men from such an unhappy condition.

17. *He came to himself.* A most expressive phrase; often applied to one who has been restored from temporary insanity. "In this place it denotes that the folly of the young man was a kind of derangement, that he was insane. So it is true of every sinner. Madness is in their heart, Eccl. ix. 3; they are estranged from God, and led, by the influence of evil passions, contrary to their better judgment, and the decisions of a sound mind."—*Barnes*. It is truly a species of insanity, to suppose that happiness can be secured, by renouncing godliness and practising iniquity. Sinners are made to believe that they can enjoy more pleasure in sin than in virtue. But when they come to themselves, they find that misery and distress attend ungodliness. They then realize that the obedient children of our heavenly Father are supplied with spiritual food, while they perish with hunger. ¶ *Hired servants.* The young man became sensible that, by his folly and extravagance, he had reduced himself, from the condition of a son, below the station of a servant; for his father's servants were not so degraded as he, in the employment assigned to them, and moreover they were full-fed, had bread enough and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger.

18. *I will arise.* It has been remarked that this was "a common expression among the Hebrews, to denote entering on a piece of business." I remark, in addition, that the word *anastas*, (ἀναστῆς) here used, is one form of the verb from which is derived *anastasis*, (ἀνάστασις),

ther, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw

generally translated *resurrection*. See note on Luke xiv. 14. ¶ *And go to my father.* He had become fully convinced that happiness could not be found in the path he had hitherto pursued ; and he resolved to retrace his steps. And although conscious that he had given his father just cause of offence, by his disobedience and folly, yet he had so much confidence in that father's goodness, that he would return, confess his faults, and implore forgiveness. This is the first step in repentance for sin. The sinner must resolve to retrace his steps, forsake his sins, confess his unworthiness before God, and ask the divine mercy. ¶ *I have sinned, &c.* Most effectually was his heart humbled ; and he resolved on a penitent confession.

19. *No more worthy, &c.* Acknowledging that he had justly forfeited all the privileges of sonship, he resolved to ask employment as a hired servant ; justly believing it would be more pleasant and more profitable to serve his father, than to serve a stranger.

20. *And he arose.* The same word is here repeated, which occurs in ver. 18. ¶ *Came to his father.* He carried his resolution into effect, and therefore obtained what he sought. Sinners often are aroused from their madness, and make a hasty resolve that they will abandon their vicious courses, and return to their allegiance to God, but fresh temptations assail them, and their resolution is not accomplished ; of course, they derive no advantage, but rather contract additional guilt, by resisting the gracious spirit which had aroused them. It is only when sinners both resolve and persist in the effort to return to their Father's house, that they can expect forgiveness. This the prodigal did ; and he obtained the blessing. ¶ *A great way off.* The father's eye recognized the son, at a distance, and notwithstanding his former disobedience

him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe,

and present miserable condition and appearance, the prodigal was regarded as a son. ¶ *Had compassion.* No resentment was expressed ; but parental love triumphed. The father's heart yearned to relieve the sufferings of his child, to clasp him to his bosom, and reinstate him in his former position as a cherished and beloved son. See note on Matt. vi. 14, 15. ¶ *And ran.* He did not wait for his son to crave forgiveness in words. It was enough, that he was penitently approaching. The parent's haste indicates his perfect readiness to forgive. ¶ *Fell on his neck, and kissed him.* By thus throwing his arms around his son, or embracing him, and by bestowing the kiss of affection, the father indicated the strong and enduring love which filled his heart. All these incidents give life and energy to the parable, impressing the most vivid idea that God is ready and willing to forgive the penitent, however polluted they may have been. "In this verse of imitable beauty, is contained the point of the parable, which was uttered by the Saviour to vindicate his own conduct in receiving sinners kindly. Who could blame this father for thus receiving this repentant son ? Not even a Pharisee could blame him. And our Saviour thus showed them, so that they could not resist it, that God received returning sinners, and that it was right for him also to receive them and treat them with attention."—*Barnes*.

21. The son commenced the confession he had resolved to make ; but before he had time to make his humble request of employment as a servant, he was interrupted by the assurance, ver. 22, that he was still a son, and to be treated as a son.

22. *Best robe.* Perhaps such a garment as the master of a feast was accustomed to furnish for his guests. See notes on Matt. xxii. 11, 12. ¶ *Ring.* The gift of a ring was anciently as now

and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew

a token of affection. ¶ *Shoes*. Rather, sandals. The worn and tattered apparel of the prodigal was replaced by a vesture becoming a beloved son. The general idea conveyed by these several figures is, that the father treated his son kindly and affectionately; and that God thus receives his penitent children: of course, it was right that his son should receive such, and manifest affection towards them.

23. *Fatted calf*. A favorite article of food in the East, and often used at their public feasts. ¶ *Be merry*. The sense of the original is not well expressed in this translation. The word signifies to *rejoice*, and is so rendered Acts ii. 26; Rom. xv. 10; Gal. iv. 27. To be merry now indicates a light and trivial mirth; but to *rejoice* denotes a more serious and substantial happiness; it is often used in a religious sense. In this place, it denotes the emotion of deep joy which was occasioned by the return of a beloved son, who had been accounted dead; not thoughtless and uproarious merriment.

24. *Was dead, and is alive again*. Either was considered dead, and is now proved to be living; or, more probably, was dead to all useful purposes, dead to virtue, dead in sin, but is now restored to moral life. See Rom. vi. 13; Eph. ii. 1. A conversion from sinfulness to holiness is not unfrequently represented as a transition from death to life. John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14.

25. *His elder son*. A new character is here introduced. The Pharisees had thus far been led on, by the charming imagery of the parable, until they must have plainly discovered the propriety of that conduct which they had before condemned in Jesus. But this was not enough. He chose that they should not only see and acknowledge the excellence of his spirit, but behold distinct-

nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would

ly the odious character of their own. Having excited their lively interest in his narrative, and called into activity their better emotions, he introduces the elder son, that they might see and condemn his wickedness, before they should fully realize that the parable was spoken against them. Luke xx. 19. ¶ *In the field*. At some distance from the house. This circumstance is well imagined; as it keeps this envious person out of sight, until suitable preparation is made to exhibit his character in the strongest light, by contrast with the beautiful images already depicted on the canvass. ¶ *He heard music and dancing*. Both music and dancing were customary, at seasons of rejoicing and on festival occasions. Indeed, they sometimes were employed as a part of the ceremonies of religious exultation and thanksgiving; Exo. xv. 20; 2 Sam. vi. 14; 1 Chron. xv. 25—29. It was natural, that the return of the long-lost son should be thus celebrated by the joyful household.

27. *Safe and sound*. In the original, a single word is used, which signifies simply in health. It is the same which occurs, Luke v. 31, rendered *the whole*, in opposition to *the sick*. See also Luke vii. 10. It is also figuratively joined with faith, and rendered *sound* and *wholesome*, indicating a doctrine conducive to moral health, or a doctrine not corrupt in itself. 1 Tim. vi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 3; Tit. ii. 1, 2.

28. *He was angry, and would not go in*. What occasioned this anger? It does not appear that this man had ever been personally injured by his brother, or that he had any just cause of complaint hitherto against his father. Yet he was so angry, that he would not even enter his father's house. The sole cause of his anger was this: his father had manifested kindness to a son, who had



not go in ; therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

29 And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment ; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my

friends :

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me ; and all that I have is thine.

been dissolute, but had repented, confessed his sin, and sought forgiveness. He knew that his father had always treated him kindly ; but he could not patiently endure it, that the same kindness should be manifested to another, whom he judged less worthy than himself. A similar spirit appears in Matt. xx. 11, 12. And this was precisely the spirit, which induced the Pharisees to murmur, because Jesus received sinners and ate with them, and which has since induced some well-meaning but misguided men to say in their haste, that they do not wish to enter heaven, if all sinners are finally to be admitted. ¶ *Came his father out and entreated him.* The impartial kindness of the father is here manifested. He not only forgave the repentant prodigal, but he also bore with the peevishness and unreasonable churlishness of his elder son. Even when that son used disrespectful and insulting language to him, ver. 29, 30, he did not renounce and cast him off ; but entreated him with the language of kindness, hoping thus to lead him also to repentance.

29, 30. In these two verses, we have a picture of those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Luke xviii. 9. This son professed his uniform faithful service, and declared that he had never disobeyed his father. How much this sounds like the prayer of the Pharisee, in another parable : " God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week ; I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke xviii. 11, 12. ¶ *Kid.* A young goat ; less valuable than a calf. He complained that he never had even a kid for his extraordinary faithfulness, while the fatted calf is killed in honor of him who has returned from a course of dissipation and debauchery. He evidently had no pleasure in serving his father, but his service was altogether mer-

cenary ; else he would not have complained that he had received no reward. This portion of the parable also illustrates the truth mentioned in ver. 7 ; for the father had truly manifested more joy at the unexpected blessing he received, in the return and reformation of his lost, vicious son, than in the service of his elder son, even though his obedience had been as perfect as he pretended. ¶ *This thy son.* He scorned to acknowledge the prodigal as his brother ; but insultingly styles him *this thy son*. His eye was evil because his father was good. Having lived on his father's bounty, from his youth, and enjoyed peace, and plenty, and happiness, under the parental roof, he grudged the kindness showed to his brother who had drained the cup of misery to the very dregs. And because his father would not drive the prodigal from his presence, an outcast and a vagabond upon the earth, this supercilious pretender to filial obedience would not enter the house, but taunted the old man as the father of a scoundrel with whom he disclaimed all kindred.

31. *All that I have is thine.* According to the parable, the father divided his property between his sons, ver. 12 ; and if the elder son had never taken a kid, it was no fault of the father. If he had cherished such feelings as to cut himself off from enjoyment, while serving his father, it was his own fault. He is assured, moreover, that he is not to be deprived of his own, by the kindness shown to his brother. But some men, and he was one of the number, seem to imagine that what others receive is taken unjustly from them ; or, at least, that their own possessions are thus made less valuable. Thus the laborers in the vineyard murmured, not because they did not receive their full reward, but because others were made equal with them. The elder son never complained that he was injured, until kindness was manifested to one whom

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

he regarded as less worthy than himself. The Pharisees did not murmur because Jesus slighted them or was negligent concerning their welfare, but because he received sinners and ate with them. And no man pretends that there is any lack of divine goodness in saving *him*, but many seem to imagine that, if God will save all sinners, salvation will become a boon scarcely worth having.

32. *Thy brother.* "Or, this brother of thine. To awaken this ill-natured, angry, inhumane man to a proper sense of his duty, both to his parent and brother, this amiable father returns him his unkind words, but in a widely different spirit. This son of mine, to whom I show mercy, is thy brother, to whom thou shouldest show bowels of tenderness and affection, especially as he is no longer the person he was. He was dead in sin; he is quickened by the power of God: he was lost to thee, to me, to himself,—but now he is found; and he will be a comfort to me, a help to thee, and a standing proof to the honor of the Most High, that God receiveth sinners."—*Clarke*.

Such was the manner, in which Jesus silenced the haughty Pharisees, when they murmured because he received sinners. It is to be observed, however, that although they were silenced, and must have been compelled to condemn their own spirit, as manifested in the elder son, they did not renounce that spirit. Like him, they were angry and would not go in. Rather than associate with those who entered the kingdom, they excluded themselves, rejected Jesus, crucified him, filled the cup of their iniquity, and endured vengeance to the uttermost. Luke xxi. 22; 1 Thess. ii. 16. Such was the conduct and fate of those who imagined that they had no need of repentance, that they were righteous, and who despised others. Yet, thanks to God's mercy, there is hope even for such sinners as these. Though they executed their murderous design against our Lord, he prayed for their forgiveness, with his dying breath. Luke xxiii. 34. And we may confidently believe the Father will answer

## CHAPTER XVI.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain

the prayer of the Son, and forgive those murderers, though he took signal vengeance of their wickedness. Ps. xcix. 8.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1—12. This parable may be regarded as a continuation of the subject embraced in the preceding chapters. The general idea is similar to that in Luke xiv. 12—14, and, in more direct terms, in Matt. xix. 21—30. The disciples were cautioned against trusting in riches, and advised to make such a use of their temporal possessions as should be most conducive to their advantage, upon the happening of an event not far distant. There was about to be a great change of dispensations, so to speak. The Mosaic dispensation, under which they had hitherto lived, was about to pass away; and those who had enjoyed and abused it were to be put forth from their stewardship. Another and better dispensation was to commence, even the kingdom of heaven, or the reign of the Messiah. But, for admission into this kingdom, certain qualifications were necessary. Dependence on worldly riches must be renounced; benevolence to mankind must be cherished, which could in no way be more appropriately manifested than by generosity to the poor, Matt. xix. 21—30, feeding the hungry, Luke xiv. 12—14, and alleviating the burdens under which men groaned, ver. 5—7. By pursuing this course, the disciples would be prepared for entrance into *everlasting habitations*, or into that kingdom which should have no end. This preparation would be two-fold: (1.) by renouncing inordinate affection for riches, they would not be deterred from perseverance unto the end, through fear of temporal loss, (see note on Matt. xix. 23, 24,) nor be in danger of being involved in the general calamity; (2.) their generous distribution of their goods to the poor would be a practical manifestation of obedience to a fundamental law of the new kingdom,—love to men,—without which no man could properly be called a disciple, or be admitted into the kingdom. Such appears to be the general idea, illustrated in this

rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy

stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg

parable; and the succeeding parable, with which the chapter closes, may be regarded as its counterpart. See notes on ver. 19—31. Many of the figures used in this parable are very apt, for the expression of this idea. Yet, we should remember, that we need not seek an exact application of every figure. In this, as in all parables, something is to be allowed for mere drapery. To both the parables in this chapter, the remarks of Campbell upon the parable of the *prodigal* may be applied with equal force and pertinency. See note on Matt. xiii. 3. With these general views of the design and leading idea of this parable, its explication may not be so difficult as some have imagined.

1. *His disciples.* Including those publicans and sinners, who came to be taught, and for receiving whom the Pharisees murmured against Jesus, and he justified himself, in the three preceding parables. The distinction is between the Pharisees who came to scoff, and the publicans and sinners who came to learn; the teachable disposition of the latter class constituted them disciples. Among these, some may have been rich. The publicans were employed in the collection of revenue, and were accused of extortion, perhaps justly. Luke iii. 12, 13. Matthew, one of this number, had evidently acquired, in some manner, a considerable property; for he made a great feast after his conversion, and thus distributed to others a portion of his wealth. Matt. ix. 9—13; Luke v. 27—32. Jesus exhorts them, "that, if they had acquired any unrighteous gains before their conversion, they would now honestly restore them, piously distribute them, that so they may make themselves friends of them, as the unjust steward had done." —*Lightfoot.* ¶ *Steward.* See note on Matt. xx. 8. As a steward had the principal management of the pecuniary concerns of his employer, he had an opportunity to embezzle goods, if so disposed. Indeed, it has been said, that, in the East, a steward is expected

to pay himself by a species of cheating, instead of being paid a regular salary. See note on ver. 6, 7. ¶ *Wasted his goods.* The original word here used is generally rendered *scattered* or *dispersed*. The meaning is sufficiently evident; he had not made a prudent use of the property committed to him. If this figure need a particular application, it is obvious: the Jews had not suitably improved the privileges of the Mosaic dispensation, and were, for their unfaithfulness, about to be ejected from their stewardship, ver. 2.

2. *Give an account.* Exhibit a statement of receipts and disbursements, that it might be known whether or not he had been faithful. "This is not to be referred to the day of judgment. It is a circumstance thrown in to prepare the way for what follows."—*Barnes.*

3. *What shall I do?* The steward was startled at the prospect of losing his employment, on which his sustenance depended. If he had accumulated wealth, he seems to have been apprehensive that this would be wrested from him, in recompense of the frauds he had committed. He evidently did not suppose himself in a situation to be comfortable without further provision; nor did he feel prepared to obtain the means of support by the ordinary method. ¶ *My lord.* My employer; the rich man named in ver. 1. This use of the word *lord* is not unusual. Gen. xxvii. 29, 37; xlii. 10; Matt. xviii. 26. ¶ *I cannot dig.* Bloomfield interprets *cannot* as implying physical inability. And it is well known that a person, even of ordinary health and strength, who has long been unaccustomed to manual labor, is not able at once to perform such labor to the advantage of himself or others. Or, it may be understood that he was *unwilling* to adopt this method of supporting himself. The former interpretation, however, seems more natural. *To dig* is put for physical labor, generally. ¶ *To beg, I am ashamed.* And well he might be, if in health, except under extraordinary circumstances.

I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

The old and the infirm are proper objects of pecuniary charity; but such as enjoy health and strength should use all other honest means to obtain a livelihood, before they resort to begging.

4. *I am resolved, &c.* As the result of his deliberation on the means of future support, he determined to effect an arrangement, by which he might save enough from the wreck of his fortunes to meet his wants. But this he could not do, directly, as his lord would seize whatever might be in his hands; he could only secure himself, by placing so much in the hands of others, as should entitle him to be supported by them. His plan is developed in the succeeding verses. In this manner he hoped to be *received into the houses* of his friends; or, in other words, procure for himself a home, when thrust forth from his stewardship.

5. *Every one.* As all pecuniary matters were transacted by the steward, all accounts were in his custody, and he had power to make a settlement with all parties. ¶ *Lord's debtors.* Those who owed his master for rents, or otherwise. See note on ver. 6, 7.

6, 7. *Measures.* The measure of oil, here referred to, is said to have contained seven and a half gallons; that of wheat, eight bushels. The precise quantity, however, is of no consequence, so far as the general idea of the parable is concerned. To one of these debtors, the steward discounted one half the amount owed; to the other, one fifth part. These are to be regarded as a specimen of his manner of settlement. To some, he discounted more, to others less, according to the circumstances of the case. Perhaps the discount was not more, in the aggregate, than his master owed him; and he was willing it should pass to that account. He feared, if he collected the whole, his master would refuse to pay him anything, because of past delinquency, and

6 And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four-score.

he would be left penniless; but by this process, he placed his property in the hands of others, hoping to derive future advantage from it. This procedure on his part was but carrying to an unreasonable extent a principle perfectly well understood between his master and himself. Calmet quotes Hill's Travels, in illustration of this matter. He says, that "It is the common custom with the merchants of this country, [Turkey,] when they hire a broker, book-keeper, or other confidential servant, to agree, that he shall claim no wages; but to make amends for that unprofitable disadvantage, they give them free and uncontrolled authority to cheat them every way they can, in managing their business; but with this proviso, that they must never exceed the privileged advantage of *ten per cent.* All under that, which they can fairly gain in settling of accounts with their respective masters, is properly *their own*; and by their masters' will is confirmed to their possession." Thus much it seemed proper to say, in illustration of the imagery employed in this parable, to show that it was natural, and descriptive of events likely enough to occur, in a country where the relation between master and steward was such as has been described. But it were idle to spiritualize every expression. Nor is it necessary to inquire very curiously, whether these latter pecuniary transactions of the steward were, in part or wholly, justifiable or otherwise; in other words, whether the abatement made in the accounts of the debtors were or were not greater than the sum which he had originally designed for his own use, after paying to his master all which he expected. All this, in my judgment, has no immediate connexion with the main intention of the parable; but is added to give an appearance of life to the narration. The simple ideas conveyed, thus far, are these: (1) Th-

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

steward had been guilty of misconduct: (2.) he was informed, and he believed, that he should be ejected from office; (3.) with a prudent forecast, he made provision for his future maintenance, so that he might not be left destitute when put out of his stewardship, but be received into the houses of his friends. This is all which seems essential in the parable, and all which was applied by our Lord; except that he says the master acknowledged the ingenuity of the steward's plan, or perhaps his prudence, in thus guarding against want.

8. *The lord.* That is, the master of the steward. ¶ *Commended.* Praised; acknowledged his shrewdness and forecast. ¶ *Unjust steward.* It should be observed, that the master did not commend, nor did Jesus commend, the injustice of the steward, either in first defrauding his master, or in going beyond the limits of his agreement, if he did so, in compounding with the debtors; but only his prudence, in making provision against a future evil. This is the point of the parable, as may be seen by its application, ver. 9. ¶ *Children of this world.* Or, children of this age. The phrase, in connexion with what precedes it, seems to indicate what are generally termed worldly men,—men who regard chiefly the concerns of this present life, and place their affections most strongly on temporal riches. ¶ *In their generation.* The word *genea*, (γενεά,) here used, frequently means a race or perhaps rather a class of men; as in Luke xi. 29—32. Such may be its meaning here. ¶ *Wiser.* This word is here to be understood as referring only to the particular subject of conversation. It is not asserted that they are wiser in all respects, that they possess more spiritual wisdom, or even more wisdom in matters of common concernment, than others; but merely that they are more skilful in warding off pecuniary disasters, more shrewd and prudent in providing the means for supplying future wants. ¶ *Children of light.* The reference is here to the Jews. They are called the children of light, because they had long enjoyed the light of reve-

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

lation; they had the oracles of God, however much they slighted and abused them. They might be called the children of light, although their minds were darkened, as they were called the children of the kingdom, even when thrust out of it. Matt. viii. 12. The succeeding verse confirms this exposition.

9. *Make to yourselves friends.* I think this phrase should not be interpreted strictly, as if the reference were to particular persons, whose friendship was to be secured by the mammon of unrighteousness; but rather in this general sense,—provide for your own safety, guard against the impending danger, secure to yourselves a fitting shelter. The peculiar phraseology was suggested by the terms of the parable, in which the steward is represented as securing the friendship of his master's debtors, so that they should protect him, when turned out of office; but the main idea is, that he provided against future want. Thus also here; the Jews were about to be discharged of their stewardship; in other words, the Jewish dispensation was about to cease; their heavens and earth would pass away with a great noise; mighty convulsions and a season of unparalleled tribulation would attend this great change; they were admonished to guard against the danger, and provide for their own security, by such means as were pointed out. They were exhorted to imitate the steward, not in his injustice, for this they had previously done to such an extent that a decree of ejectment from their stewardship had already passed; but in making a prudent provision for the future. This was yet in their power, if they would hearken to the voice of wisdom and obey it. ¶ *Mammon of unrighteousness.* Or, unrighteous mammon; or, as some prefer, uncertain mammon. It will be recollected that *mammon* is a Syriac word, denoting riches. See note on Matt. vi. 24. The phrase here may mean unrighteous riches, that is, wealth obtained unjustly, by unrighteous means; or it may mean uncertain or deceitful riches. "The word unrighteous here stands opposed to the 'true

10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mam-

mon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

riches' in ver. 11, and means deceitful, false, not to be trusted. It has this meaning often. See 1 Tim. vi. 17; Luke xii. 33; Matt. vi. 19; xix. 21. It does not signify, therefore, that they had acquired the property unjustly, but that property was deceitful, and not to be trusted."—*Barnes*. This wealth, however obtained, they were exhorted so to use, as to provide for their security when they should fail, or be discharged from their stewardship. The manner in which this was to be done is suggested in the note at the commencement of this chapter. ¶ *When ye fail*. That is, when the event shall occur, similar to the discharge of the steward from office; when the old dispensation shall be abolished, and ye shall no longer be even nominal stewards of God. ¶ *They may receive you*. "This passage is more properly taken impersonally; the phrase 'that they may receive you' being equivalent to *that ye may be received* into everlasting habitations. Impersonal verbs of this form are frequent in Greek; for example, Luke xii. 20, 'This night shall *they require* thy soul of thee,' in the Greek, for 'thy soul shall be required of thee.'"—*Robinson*. This meaning of the phrase corresponds with the general interpretation of the former part of the verse; and the meaning of the whole is,—make such use of your worldly goods, make such prudent provision for the future, that, when the impending catastrophe shall come, ye may be received into a place of security. ¶ *Everlasting habitations*. That is, the kingdom of heaven, which was then near at hand. This form of expression was suggested by the *houses* in the parable. If they distributed their possessions to the poor, they would not fail in the hour of trial, through fear of temporal loss, and would moreover manifest that spirit of love towards men which is characteristic of Christianity. See Matt. xix. 21—30. But if their love of riches prevented their entrance into the kingdom, Matt. xix. 23, 24, they must expect the conse-

quences intimated in Matt. xxi. 43; Luke xiii. 24—30; and in the parable which concludes this chapter, ver. 19—31.

10. *He that is faithful, &c.* This maxim expresses a general truth. A man who acts upon *principle* will be as faithful in small matters as in great; as scrupulously honest in small as in large transactions. And the man who is known to be dishonest and fraudulent in small affairs cannot be trusted in matters of greater importance; for we have no evidence that he is guided by principle.

11. *If ye have not been faithful, &c.* This, as addressed to the disciples, has respect to the future, rather than the past. The meaning is, if ye shall not be faithful, or, if ye shall not have been faithful, when the period indicated shall arrive. If you do not use the means you possess in relieving the distresses and promoting the happiness of mankind; if you cling to these false and deceitful riches as your principal good, and do not generously communicate to others as they have need; how can you expect that richer blessings shall be bestowed upon you? *Who will commit*, may be understood impersonally, like "they may receive," in ver. 9, meaning, *how shall you obtain?* The true riches indicate the blessings of the kingdom of God, whose abundance is figuratively expressed in Matt. xix. 29, and, in substantially the same manner, Matt. xix. 21; Luke xiii. 23, 29; compare Matt. viii. 11, 12.

12. The meaning of this verse is very similar to that of the preceding, expressed in somewhat different terms. The unrighteous mammon, or worldly riches, is here called *another's*. In an important sense, the wealth which a man possesses belongs to others; he is bound to use it for the promotion of their happiness, for the relief of their distresses. They have a righteous claim upon it, for that purpose. If the possessor hoard it, in such way as to benefit neither himself nor others, he is not faithful. The steward was unfaith-

13 ¶ No servant can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

ful, in wasting his master's goods ; the covetous Jews were unfaithful in withholding from the poor more than was meet ; and not content with this, they exhibited their unfitness for the Messiah's kingdom, by devouring widows' houses, Matt. xxiii. 14 ; thus proving themselves destitute of that spirit of philanthropy which disciples were bound to cherish. The *true riches* are here styled *their own* ; indicating the permanent, abiding nature of spiritual blessings, in contradistinction to the fleeting, uncertain duration of worldly wealth ; but more particularly, so far as it has reference to the parable, it indicates the blessings to which the Jews considered themselves entitled by right. They were the peculiar people of God, and had uniformly expected that, when the Messiah should appear, the benefits of his reign should be peculiarly enjoyed by themselves. It is on the same principle, that they were called the children of the kingdom, though for their disobedience cast out of it, Matt. viii. 12, and the kingdom said to be taken from them and given to others, as if they had formerly possessed it by right, or as their own, Matt. xxi. 43.

13. See notes on Matt. vi. 24. The substance of the parable and its application may be regarded as condensed in this verse. So long as the Jews remained utterly devoted to mammon, and placed their main trust in riches, they could not enter the kingdom of God, but would be entirely destitute when their dispensation ceased. They could only obtain admission to that kingdom, the everlasting habitations, and possess the true riches, or the blessings of the kingdom, by renouncing their inordinate affection for worldly wealth, Luke xiv. 33, and using it for the general diffusion of happiness, Luke xviii. 22.

14. *The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard, &c.* Doubtless our Lord designed they should hear ; for they needed this admonition, even more than the publicans and sinners to whom it was directly addressed. They were

14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your

*covetous* ; instead of distributing to the poor, their chief desire was to accumulate ; and, for this purpose, they resorted to the most infamous means. Their hearts being thus determined to do evil, they *derided* or scoffed at Jesus, when he counselled his disciples to seek rather the kingdom of heaven.

15. *He said unto them.* That is, to the scoffing Pharisees. He warned them that they had a personal and deep interest in the subject of his conversation ; that they were unclean before God, and unfit for his kingdom ; that the legal dispensation was even then about to give place to the kingdom of God, ver. 16 ; that any further connexion with that which was thus abolished would be adulterous and wicked, ver. 18 ; and that unless they prepared themselves, in the manner he had indicated, for admission into the new and heavenly kingdom, they would not only be removed from their former stewardship, but be left utterly destitute, and be subjected to the severe mortification and distress of seeing the Gentile nations partaking the blessings of the kingdom, while they themselves were thrust out, ver. 19—31. See also Matt. viii. 11, 12 ; Luke xiii. 28, 29. ¶ *Justify yourselves.* Profess to be just ; endeavor to appear righteous in the sight of men. See Luke xviii. 9. ¶ *God knoweth your hearts.* He sees your true character. The difference between the *apparent* and the *actual* character of the Pharisees is vividly displayed, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. ¶ *Highly esteemed, &c.* The reference, of course, must be restricted to the subject of conversation. Men highly esteem many things which are approved by God ; mercy, justice, natural affection, universal benevolence and good-will, these and such like are well-pleasing in the sight of God and men. But our Lord referred to the affected righteousness of the Pharisees, and assured them that it was abominable to God, however men might be deceived by it. Such righteousness would never be a passport to the kingdom of heaven. See note on Matt. v. 20. If they would obtain ad-

hearts : for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

16 The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven

mission, they must observe the rules he had just given. They might deride and mock now ; but when the legal dispensation should cease, ver. 16, and they should be excluded from the kingdom, ver. 19—31, they would then find it was no subject of derision, but a fearful reality.

16. See notes on Matt. xi. 12, 13. The special design of this declaration was to assure the Pharisees that the time was at hand : they might not safely delay their preparation for the approaching change ; already was the kingdom of God preached ; it was at hand ; its establishment should be witnessed by some then living, Matt. xvi. 27, 28 ; as many as entered it should be safe ; but its rejecters and deriders should endure such tribulation as had no parallel in all time ; and this too should come upon that very generation, Matt. xxiv. 21—35.

17. See note on Matt. v. 18. Whether or not our Lord had special reference to the fact, it is worthy of observation that in the law it is written, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. xviii. 18, 19. See also Mal. iv. 1. These were among the things which should not fail. The law should not utterly pass until its denunciations were accomplished. And this period was even now at hand.

18. See note on Matt. v. 32. By this figure, our Lord taught the Pharisees, that it was idle for them to expect safety, on account of their scrupulous observance of the ceremonial law. Matt. xxiii. 23. It was proper to observe the law, while it continued in force ; it would have been sinful not to do so. But when the law was abolished,

and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery ; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich

all further connexion with it was adulterous. What God joins, none may innocently separate ; what he separates, none may innocently reunite. The same figure is used by the apostle, to show that the claims of the law were abolished, Rom. vii. 1—3. The Pharisees might not expect, by cleaving to a dead law, to escape the calamity figuratively represented in the parable which follows ; they thus increased, instead of diminishing, their guilt and danger. Their only safety, so far as it was in their power, consisted in a prompt and hearty obedience to the directions to which they had listened with scorn and derision.

19—31. The parable contained in these verses, by most commentators, is supposed to teach and illustrate the strict eternity of hell-torments. But some, even among those who believed in such torments, have acknowledged that our Lord intended here to represent the rejection of the Jews and the gathering of the Gentiles. See Selections, sect. xlix. It has been suggested, that this is not a parable, but a veritable history, because Luke does not expressly call it a parable. But this opinion is so little entitled to consideration, that it is treated with utter contempt by a commentator, whose equal for Jewish learning the Gentile world has seldom known.—"Whoever believes this not to be a parable, but a true story, let him believe also those little friars, whose trade it is to show the monuments at Jerusalem to pilgrims, and point exactly to the place where the house of the 'rich glutton' stood. Most accurate keepers of antiquity, indeed ! who, after so many hundred of years, such overthrows of Jerusalem, such devastations and changes, can rake out of the rubbish the place of so private a house, and such a one too that never had any being, but merely in parable. And that it was a parable, not only the consent of all expositors may assure us, but the



man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously.

thing itself speaks it. The main scope and design of it seems this,—to hint the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, who, though they had Moses and the prophets, did not believe them, nay, would not believe, though one (even Jesus) arose from the dead. For that conclusion of the parable abundantly evidenceth what it aimed at: ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one arose from the dead.’”—*Lightfoot.*

This parable appears to be intimately connected with the preceding portion of the chapter, and, as I have already remarked, to be the counterpart of the parable in ver. 1—8. Jesus referred to a very great change, which was about to occur, in the condition of the Jewish people, equivalent to the discharge of the steward from office and his exposure to utter destitution and misery. He instructed his disciples how they might provide for their own safety and happiness, and attain admission to the kingdom of heaven. The Pharisees, who heard him, treated the whole matter with derision, ver. 14. Jesus assured them that their danger was not imaginary but actual; that their gilded hypocrisy would not shield them from it, for God knew their wickedness, ver. 15; that legal and ceremonial observances would not protect them, for the law was superseded by the new dispensation, ver. 16; and, indeed, that by rejecting the gospel and cleaving to the law, they increased their guilt, becoming like him who married a woman who had been put away from her husband, ver. 18. He then proceeded, by a parable, to describe the condition which awaited them, as the penalty of their unbelief and ungodliness, contrasting it with the condition of them who observed his directions and were admitted into the kingdom of God. Such I suppose to be the general design and the pervading idea of this parable. The imagery is sufficiently descriptive, to express the principal features of the facts illustrated; yet much of it I regard as mere imagery, no more requiring a particular application than the *fatted calf* and the *kid*, in the parable of the *prodigal*. The portions which seem to require such application will

receive attention in the notes. In general terms, I suppose the rich man represents the Jewish nation; his sustenance and apparel being characteristic of *his* wealth, but not necessarily indicating any peculiarity in *their* condition. Lazarus represents the Gentile world, whose spiritual poverty, and dependence on the Jews for the little true religious knowledge they possessed, are indicated by his utter destitution and beggary. The death of Lazarus, ver. 22, may represent a great change in the condition of the Gentiles; but I rather regard it as imagery corresponding with the death of the rich man, which is significative; or designed to prepare the way for speaking of him as in Abraham's bosom, which doubtless represents an important change in their condition. The death of the rich man, ver. 22, represents the overturning of the Jewish polity, by the abrogation of the law and the loss of national privileges. The torments of the rich man and the peaceful condition of Lazarus, ver. 23, represent the same state of things which is expressed in other terms, in Luke xiii. 28, 29; namely, the reception of the Gentiles into the gospel kingdom, and the rejection of the Jews, and their consequent misery. The request of the rich man to Abraham for assistance, and his denial, ver. 24, 25, may represent the vain efforts of the Jews to obtain support and comfort from their law, now superseded by the gospel; or it may be designed merely to add vividness to the picture of their misery. Abraham's remark, that the condition of the two parties was reversed, may be understood as illustrative of the fact mentioned by the apostle, Rom. xi. 30, 31. Each, in his turn, enjoyed the blessing; and each, in his turn, was destitute of it. Yet God was impartial, both in this dispensation of privileges, and in the consequences which should ensue. The great gulf, ver. 26, represents the impassable barrier, occasioned by the stubborn unbelief of the Jews. After they had rejected the divine evidence afforded by miracles which Jesus wrought in their presence, attributing them to diabolical rather than divine power, there remained no further evidence by which the minds of that stiff-

ously every day :

acked people could be convinced of the truth. Our Lord often warned them, that the period was approaching, after which they might not expect to obtain admission to his kingdom. See Luke xiii. 24—27. The conversation respecting the condition of the five brethren, ver. 27—30, may be regarded as introductory or preparatory to what follows, rather than as requiring particular application to any individuals. The final remark, ver. 31, that not even the resurrection of one from the dead would convince those who resisted the testimony of Moses and the prophets, is strikingly illustrative of the mental and moral condition of the Jews, who, having failed to be convinced by Moses and the prophets that Jesus was the Messiah, having also hardened their hearts against the evidence arising from miracles, continued in unbelief, even after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was proclaimed among them and proved beyond reasonable doubt. The result of the whole matter, therefore, illustrated by this parable, is, that the kingdom of God was to be transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles; that this transfer would occasion disappointment and misery to the Jewish nation; that all efforts, on their part, to obtain relief, out of the kingdom, would be unavailing; and that when thus shut out for their unbelief, their exclusion as a nation must long endure, from the very nature of the case, inasmuch as no stronger evidence could be presented to their minds than that which had already been presented and rejected.

Before dismissing the subject, it seems proper to notice a peculiarity in the imagery here employed. It "is borrowed from the opinions of the heathen concerning *hades*, or the invisible world, the state of the dead, — which the Jews, in the time of our Saviour's ministry, had in part imbibed. In its character as a parable, this differs from none other in the New Testament, except in the fact now named, namely, that the imagery is principally drawn, not from the things of this world, but from the fabled regions of Tartarus and Elysium. It is the case in all parables, that the object is not to magnify and set up the circumstance which makes the *image* or similitude; but, by the use of that, to illustrate

20 And there was a certain beg-

and establish some important fact or doctrine."—*Whittemore*, on Par., pp. 210, 211. This is an important observation, which should not be overlooked. The following bears upon the same point :—A parable "is a narrative of some fictitious or real event, in order to illustrate more clearly some truth that the speaker wished to communicate. — It is not necessary to suppose that the narratives were strictly true. The main thing,—the inculcation of spiritual truth,—was gained equally, whether it was true, or was only a supposed case. Nor was there any dishonesty in this. It was well understood. No person was deceived. The speaker was not understood to affirm the thing literally narrated, but only to fix the attention more firmly on the moral truth that he presented."—*Barnes*. In conformity with these judicious remarks, we are not to understand our Lord to affirm the actual occurrence of the events narrated in this parable, or the correctness of the fancies which the Jews had imbibed, respecting the condition of men in the future life. His object was equally gained, whether these things were *actually* true or false. It was not his design, to expound or illustrate the condition of the rich and poor, the vicious and virtuous, the stubborn unbeliever and willing convert, in *hades*; but he used this imagery to convey instruction, in a vivid manner, upon a different subject. And in so doing, he did not practise deception; for *he was not understood to affirm the thing literally narrated*. The futile objection, sometimes urged, that every figure must be drawn from some corresponding reality, and that this parable must therefore be understood to *imply*, though it may not *affirm*, the truth of the opinions from which its imagery is taken, may be sufficiently answered by a reference to the earliest parable on record, Judg. ix. 8—15. I will not assume to affix limits to almighty power; but I think there can be no irreverence in believing most firmly that God never did and never will cause trees to speak, and elect for themselves kings. The terms of Jotham's parable, however, are quite as positive as any which occur in that now under consideration; and I see no more necessity for understanding the speaker to "affirm the thing literally"

gar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with

narrated," in the one case than in the other. In both cases, a state of things was imagined, by which important truth might be impressed on the minds of the hearers; and *that truth* is all which materially concerns us, in either case. The literal narrative, whatever be its actual character, cannot be proved true or false, nor is its truth or falsity even implied, by its use for such a purpose. This question is to be settled by other evidence.

19. *A certain rich man.* This figure was naturally suggested by the previous conversation. In chap. xiv., we find Jesus addressing the Jews, as rich men, and instructing them how to gain admission to the gospel kingdom, by weaning their affections from worldly wealth. Having replied, ch. xv., to their murmurs respecting the character of his disciples, he resumed the same subject, ver. 1, of which subject this parable forms the natural conclusion. ¶ *Purple and fine linen.* Such apparel as only the rich could procure. The purple has been supposed to indicate the political power of the Jews, being the color of royalty, and the fine linen the ecclesiastical, being worn by the priests; but perhaps it was designed only as descriptive of riches, to complete the picture. ¶ *Fared sumptuously.* Lived in a luxurious manner.

20. *Beggar.* Rather, poor man. The word in the original does not mean one who obtained sustenance by begging; but only a poor person, in contrast with the rich man before named. ¶ *Lazarus.* Some have supposed a reference was here covertly made to the Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead; see ver. 31. But this name, like many other Hebrew names, was significant, meaning a poor person, and was probably adopted merely as a descriptive epithet. ¶ *Laid at his gate.* Placed near the door, so that he might be seen and relieved by the rich man; a custom which prevailed in the East. ¶ *Full of sores.* It seems unnecessary to spiritualize such an expression, which may rather be regarded as thrown in, to give completeness to a description of poverty.

21. *Desiring to be fed, &c.* The original word has been said to denote

the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

*delighting*, rather than *desiring*. And doubts have been expressed, whether the rich man failed in the performance of the duties of hospitality. Campbell has a long critical note, designed to show that the rich man was not culpable in this matter. The general scope of the parable, however, seems to denote our Lord's intention to represent the rich man as uncharitable, and his subsequent misery as the result of his inordinate attachment to wealth. It must be remembered, that the parable is designed to illustrate the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God, and the rejection of the Jews. By recurring to our Lord's language on this subject, it will be seen that he often, almost uniformly, required an abandonment of wealth for the relief of the poor, as an essential pre-requisite for admission to his kingdom. See Luke x. 25—28, and the succeeding parable, 29—37; xii. 31—33; xiv. 12—14, 33; xvi. 9, and the note; xviii. 18—25. It may appear too much like a mixed metaphor, to suppose the literally poor, in general, and the spiritually poor Gentiles, in particular, are represented by Lazarus; nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that such is the fact. The covetous and ambitious desires of the Jews, their inordinate craving for wealth and temporal honor and glory, constituted one of the principal obstacles which prevented them from receiving Jesus as the Messiah. He required humility and universal love; neither of which could they find in their hearts. He required them to dispose of their wealth for the relief of the poor, as a test of discipleship; this they refused to do, stood aloof from him, persisted in their opposition, and were thrust out of his kingdom. The parable seems to recognize these facts; and, if so, to intimate that Lazarus received less assistance from the rich man, than the spirit of true discipleship would have prompted. ¶ *The dogs came and licked his sores.* This circumstance renders the picture of poverty and destitution more vivid; the relief which his own species neglected to afford was administered by affectionate brutes. So far as this applies to the condition of the

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried :

23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth

Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue : for I am torment-

Gentiles, it affords a most gloomy view of their moral degradation and spiritual poverty and helplessness.

22. *The beggar died.* As I have already remarked, I consider this to be thrown in chiefly, to preserve harmony in the imagery, and to prepare for what follows. It may be, however, that the death of Lazarus was designed to represent the transition of the Gentiles, from the outer darkness in which they had dwelt, into the glorious kingdom of the Redeemer; a change not inaptly compared to the passage from a state of destitution and distress into Elysium. ¶ *Carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.* Introduced into the kingdom of heaven, by the ministry of the apostolical messengers or angels; represented, according to the general imagery of the parable, by a phrase common among the Jews. "Of R. Judah, when he died, they said, this day he sits in Abraham's bosom."—*Whitby*. Similar phrases are elsewhere used to denote the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven, as established on the earth. Matt. viii. 11. ¶ *The rich man also died, and was buried.* This denotes the final act of exclusion against the unhappy race of the Jews; the same event which is frequently described by shutting the door against them, and refusing to open it again for their admission, as in Luke xiii. 25—29. They were thenceforth, as a nation, as effectually cut off from the privileges of the gospel, as the literally dead from the enjoyments of the present life. The absolute hopelessness of their condition, in this respect, is indicated by the additional remark, that he *was buried*.

23. *In hell.* Some join these words with the foregoing verse: reading, *he was buried in hell*, or in the grave. But no apparent advantage results from this change of pointing the passage. It is rendered no more clear, so far as I can see, nor is its meaning thereby essentially changed. For the general meaning of *hades*, (ᾍδης,) here rendered *hell*,

see note on Matt. xi. 23. There can be no question, that, from whatever source the imagery may have been drawn, the rich man is represented as miserable, and Lazarus happy. If, as is probable, it was drawn from the heathen fable, transplanted into Jewish soil, then Abraham's bosom stands for Elysium. in the narrative, and the rich man occupies that portion of *hades* called Tartarus. At the least, one was comforted, but the other tormented. ¶ *Being in torments.* The heathens supposed the wicked were tormented in Tartarus. Figuratively, this denotes the same torment which is elsewhere expressed by weeping and gnashing of teeth. See notes on Matt. viii. 11, 12. ¶ *Lazarus in his bosom.* This expression may be regarded as identical with that used in Matt. viii. 11, (see the note,) where it is said that the Gentiles shall sit, or rather recline, with Abraham at the gospel feast, or in the kingdom of heaven. In the Jewish manner of reclining at table, resting on the left elbow, one might properly be said to recline in the bosom of another. Thus John is represented as "leaning on Jesus' bosom," John xiii. 23, while both were evidently reclining at table. The idea, conveyed under this imagery, is, that the Gentiles were admitted into the kingdom.

24. In this verse, the misery of the rich man, previously indicated by the general term *torments*, is further denoted by a particular specification of fire. This fully accords with the heathen opinions of torment in Tartarus; for they believed that literal fire would be employed, and that the *bodies* of the wicked should suffer its fury. Hence the rich man desires *water* to cool his *tongue*. I think few will be disposed to interpret this literally; yet there is just as much reason to do so, as for thus interpreting any part of the parable. If Jesus vouched for the truth of the fable generally, by employing it as the imagery of a parable, just as certainly he vouched for the truth of every par

ed in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

ticular, thus employed,—the gulf and the conversation across it, the flames, the water, the tongue of the rich man, and the finger of Lazarus, all existing literally and bodily in *hades*. The application of this figure to the miserable condition of the Jews, excluded from the kingdom, is mentioned in the note on ver. 23.

25. The reply of Abraham indicates the justice of God, in rejecting the Jews and accepting the Gentiles. The Jews had enjoyed high privileges, and abused them. They disregarded the law and the prophets, which testified concerning Jesus; they rejected him, when he gave them assurance of his Messiahship, both by language such as never man spoke, and by works which no man could perform without divine assistance; they slighted his admonitions and refused to obey his precepts. Having thus abused their blessings, it was proper and just that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation producing its appropriate fruits. Matt. xxi. 43.

26. The imagery in this verse is consistent with the general construction of the parable. The heathens believed that Elysium and Tartarus were so near each other, that their several inhabitants could converse with each other; but that they were separated by a barrier, which none were permitted to pass. The idea here illustrated is, that the door of the kingdom was effectually shut against the Jews. Luke xiii. 25—27. See note on ver. 22.

27, 23. *Five brethren*. "The number *five* is mentioned merely to preserve the appearance of verisimilitude in the story. It is not to be spiritualized, nor are we to suppose that it has any hidden or

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

inscrutable meaning."—*Barnes*. The same remark may be applied to all which is contained in these two verses. It is thrown in to give completeness to the narrative, and to prepare the way for what follows. Thus far, the representation is of an individual. Jesus designed it for the nation; and adopted this method to show more plainly that his reference was general; that, in fact, his parable had relation, not to one, but to many.

29. *Moses*. The first five books in the Bible. ¶ *The prophets*. The prophetic writings. The Jews were accustomed to speak thus of the Old Testament. ¶ *Let them hear them*. Let them be convinced by their own scriptures, the "oracles of God." These sufficiently indicated Jesus as the Messiah. If men would carefully study Moses and the prophets, and compare their predictions with what was accomplished in Jesus, they might easily see that he was the one "that should come," Luke vii. 19. To this source of information he directed the Jews to look, who professed to believe that the Messiah's advent and character were therein revealed. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John v. 39, 40. Here is stated the fact that Moses and the prophets furnished sufficient evidence of his Messiahship, and that the Jews would not credit it, so as to receive him, and enter into life, or, which is the same thing, into the kingdom of God.

30. *If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent*. The Jews were perpetually asking additional evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. See

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**T**HEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but wo unto him through whom they come!

Matt. xii. 33—42; Luke xi. 16, 29—32. Jesus declined giving any such sign as they required. He had done enough already, to convince any except such as were either wilfully blind or judicially blinded; yet one sign, here referred to, the sign of the prophet Jonas, that is, his own resurrection from the dead, should be added; but even this would be unavailing. It was utterly unreasonable to demand further evidence of the truth, or additional inducements to repentance. If even the idolatrous inhabitants of Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, had witnessed such works as the Jews repeatedly saw, they would have repented, and their cities would have remained. A more severe retribution, therefore, awaited that more stubborn and guilty people.

31. In this verse, we have the point to which several of the circumstances previously related are preparatory. Jesus designed to show the hopeless and desperate condition of the people, who so stubbornly resisted the force of evidence. They had not been convinced by their own prophets; they had not been convinced by the most stupendous and incontrovertible miracles; and they would not be convinced by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, after they had crucified and slain him with wicked hands. Their exclusion from the kingdom, which he came to establish, must therefore be permanent. And the event verified the prediction. They were not persuaded by his resurrection, but persecuted and procured the death of those who testified the fact, until the apostles, satisfied that they *would not* enter the kingdom, turned to the Gentiles, as commanded. Acts xiii. 46—48. These gladly received the proffered mercy, and sat down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in that kingdom of which the Jews proved themselves unworthy. That unhappy nation en-

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee

tered not. Nearly twenty centuries have rolled away, and they yet remain excluded, wanderers and outcasts from the city of God. How much longer they shall be debarred entrance, God knows. But, when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have been brought in, there is hope for them, even in a national capacity. See Rom. chap. xi. And for them who were thus excluded from God's kingdom on earth, there is hope in the boundless mercy of God, as individuals. Though they sinned with a high hand, and suffered the extremity of wrath, 1 Thess. ii. 16, yet the arm of the Lord is not shortened, that he cannot save, nor has his loving kindness failed, that he will not. The prayer of his Son for their forgiveness will be had in remembrance before God; for he heard him always. John xi. 42. See note at the end of Luke chap. xv.

For a more labored exposition of this parable, see Ballou's and Whitemore's Notes on the Parables; Univ. Guide, pp. 148—154; Ballou's Select Sermons, pp. 37—50; Balfour's First Inquiry, 3d Edit., pp. 59—84; Rayner's Nine Lectures on this Parable.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1, 2. See notes on Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

3. See note on Matt. xviii. 15. *Take heed to yourselves.* Be circumspect in your conduct. ¶ *Rebuke.* In love, not in wrath. Thus, in Matthew the direction is, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Make no unnecessary trouble or excitement. Strive for a quiet and friendly settlement of all personal difficulties. ¶ *Forgive him.* Reinstate him in the place he formerly held in your estimation and affection; if he truly repents, which is here implied, you may believe he will not repeat his trespass, and may therefore regard him as never having transgressed. See note on Matt. vi 14, 15.

seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

4. See notes on Matt. xviii. 21, 22.

5. *Increase our faith.* Some have understood this request to relate to the power of performing miracles, as in Matt. xvii. 16—20. But the more natural interpretation is, that the disciples, conscious of the difficulty which attended obedience to the command just given, requested additional strength, that they might perform it faithfully. In this case, *faith* must be understood in a more comprehensive sense than mere *belief* or *confidence*; it must include the effect wrought by its spiritual energy, the love and the purification of heart, which faith produces. Acts xv. 9; Gal. v. 6; 1 John iii. 3. It is the characteristic of true faith, that it assimilates the spirit of the believer to the spirit of Jesus, and in the same proportion that this effect is produced, men become able to forgive their brethren, even as Jesus forgave them who trespassed against him. To a man, not under the influence of Christ's spirit, scarcely any duty is so difficult of performance, as the forgiveness of injuries. And even those, whose spirits are measurably conformed to the spirit of God's dear Son, have abundant occasion to pray, "Lord, increase our faith." But the duty must be performed by us, if we would be true disciples. If a brother trespass against us, *and repent*, ver. 4, we are bound to forgive him. If he do not repent, we cannot forgive him. We may cherish towards him the most benevolent feelings, and the most fervent desire for his welfare; but, until he repents, we must regard him as a transgressor, and cannot reinstate him in his former position. God does not require us to perform impossibilities, or to believe contrary to the plainest evidence. He does not require us to believe that a man is not a transgressor, while we have the most conclusive evidence that he is; to regard a man as a friend, whose whole conduct proves him to be an enemy. Hence it is, that while we are required to *love* our enemies, which we may do, and shall do, if we have the spirit of Christ, we

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

are not required to *forgive* trespassers, unless they repent, and turn from their evil way,—which we cannot do; for it is impossible to believe that to be good which we know to be evil, or to reinstate a man, in our judgment and heart, as a friend, while we have irresistible evidence that he continues an enemy. The difference between love and forgiveness, I apprehend, is too frequently overlooked; but to my mind, it seems obvious and important. We may love those whom we cannot forgive; and we should be kind to them, and strive to do them good; thus may their hearts be melted to repentance, and they become fit subjects of forgiveness.

6. See note on Matt. xvii. 20. ¶ *Sycamine.* This name, like sycamore, is now generally applied to the tree familiarly known as the button-wood; but the tree bearing this name in the East was of a different kind. It "seems to partake of the nature of two distinct species, the mulberry and the fig, the former in its leaf, and the latter in its fruit." Norden, quoted by Calmet, says, "This sycamore is of the height of a beech, and bears its fruit in a manner quite different from other trees. It has them on the trunk itself, which shoots out little sprigs, in form of a grape stalk, at the end of which grows the fruit, close to one another, most like bunches of grapes. The tree is always green, and bears fruit several times in a year," &c. Probably, a tree of this kind was standing within sight of Jesus, and suggested the comparison. The meaning is, that although it might seem as difficult to eradicate an unforgiving spirit from the heart, as to uproot that tree from the earth, yet by the power and influence of a true faith it might be done. All duty is easy, when the fundamental principles of the gospel, love to God and love to men, become living and active principles in the heart. According to the abundance and purity of such love, is the ability to obey the divine requirements. But, in our best estate, we are conscious of

7 But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto

much imperfection, and have occasion to pray for an increase of faith.

7—10. Most commentators suppose this address of our Lord to his disciples has no immediate connexion with the preceding discourse, and that it was uttered on another occasion. But the construction of the passage certainly indicates that all which is contained in ver. 1—10, was one continuous conversation; and no apparent reason exists for thus disconnecting the several parts. The application of the figure, here used, to the subject of the preceding remarks, may not be so obvious, at first sight, as in other cases; yet it needs no forced or strained interpretation, to show that it has such application, and is happily adapted to enforce the performance of the duty required, in a proper spirit, and with proper expectations. Doddridge seems to have at least partly discovered the true design of this passage. He paraphrases it thus:—"Endeavor therefore to live in the exercise of this noble grace, and in a series of such services as are the proper fruits of it; but in the midst of all, be careful to maintain the deepest humility, as in the presence of God your heavenly Master, on whom, as you are his servants, you can have no claim of merit; for who is there of you, that, if he has a servant ploughing his ground or feeding his flock, will say unto him, as soon as he comes in from the field, Come in, and sit down at the table with me? or will he not rather say to him, if it was a part of that servant's business to do it, Make ready somewhat for my supper, and, when it is prepared, gird up thy garments close about thee, and wait upon me while I am eating and drinking; and afterwards thou shalt sit down to eat and drink thyself? And suppose he should observe his orders with the greatest diligence, does he think himself obliged to thank that servant because he hath done what was commanded him? I apprehend he does not, because he has an authority over the servant, and may justly claim

him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant,

his obedience as a matter of debt. Now, to apply this to your own services; so likewise ye, when you have faithfully done all that was commanded you in the exactest manner, yet should still say, Surely we are worthless and unprofitable servants, who cannot pretend to have merited anything from the hand of our Master; for we have done no more than what we were, by virtue of our relation to God, and dependence upon him, indispensably obliged to do, as much as any purchased slave is obliged to serve his master. And assure yourselves, that no services will be so pleasing to God as those performed with such an humble spirit." Thus much for the lesson of humility here taught.

Another view may be taken of this subject, which I do not recollect to have seen. When Jesus instructed his disciples to pray, "Forgive us our debts," &c., Matt. vi. 12, he instructed them, that, in order to receive forgiveness, they also must forgive others; "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. vi. 14, 15. The passage under consideration seems to embrace the same ideas. Jesus first requires his disciples to forgive trespasses, ver. 3, 4; they intimate the difficulty of obedience, by requesting an increase of faith, or ability to obey, ver. 5; he assures them that the true faith, even in a minute degree, will enable them to perform what seems to be such a difficult duty, ver. 6; enforces its performance, by a lively figure, or, as it may without much impropriety be called, a parable, denoting that, unless they do thus forgive, they may not expect to be forgiven, ver. 7, 8; and then admonishes them, that, even when they have performed the duty thus required, they are to regard the blessing which they shall receive not so much a reward as a free and gracious gift, inasmuch as they have done no more than their



because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

duty, ver. 9, 10. The master does not direct his servant to sit down immediately and eat; but he requires of him first the performance of a specified service; so God does not forgive his sinful children, until they shall first manifest their obedience, by forgiving others, agreeably to his command. It is not unreasonable that God should require this, nor do men entitle themselves to thanks or reward by compliance; because it is no more than their duty. Moreover, from the very nature of forgiveness, men cannot receive it, while they cherish an unforgiving spirit. To forgive is to reinstate another in the position he formerly occupied, or to remember his sins no more, to his disadvantage. Heb. viii. 12. But an unforgiving spirit is inconsistent with the requisitions of the gospel, and is sinful; and it is clear that God cannot forget the sinfulness of men, while it continues to exist, nor regard them as never having sinned, while he sees such corruption in their hearts.

9. *I trow not.* I think not. *Trow* is an old English word, now obsolete.

10. *Unprofitable.* It should be observed, that although the obedience of men is unprofitable to God, and imposes on him no obligation to render a reward as of debt, still it is in the highest degree profitable to themselves. The obedient man enjoys peace, happiness, the testimony of an approving conscience; the disobedient brings upon himself trouble and sorrow. Godliness is profitable in all respects to men; for it has the promise of happiness, at all times, and in all places. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

11. *Went to Jerusalem.* That is, from Galilee, where he had been teaching. He had now completed his work in that province, and was ready to de-

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

part. See notes on Luke xiii. 31—33. ¶ *Through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.* "By the words *through the midst*, we are not to understand that Jesus went through the middle part of each of these provinces; but that he only went through them, and probably through that part of Samaria which was the edge of it on the eastern side. All who went from Galilee to Jerusalem must have necessarily passed through Samaria, (unless they had gone to the westward a very great way about,) as Josephus has described the limits of Samaria in Jew. Wars, B. iii., ch. iii., § 4. See, to the same purpose, his Antiq., B. xx., ch. v., § 1. — To which may be added, that John, in chap. iv. 4, when he tells us that Jesus left Judea to go unto Galilee, says, that he must needs go through Samaria."—Pearce. Others understand *through the midst* to mean *between* or on the confines of the two provinces.

12, 13. *As he entered, &c.* Rather as he was entering. Leprous persons were not allowed to reside in cities and villages, but had places assigned for their residence, in the suburbs. See Lev. xiii. 45, 46. Even kings were subject to this exclusion. See 2 Kings xv. 5; 2 Chron. xxvi. 20. As the law prohibited such unfortunate persons from a near approach to others, lest they should communicate the infection, these men *stood afar off* from Jesus, while they addressed him, and besought him to have *mercy* on them, ver. 13; that is, to heal them of their disease.

14. *Go, show yourselves, &c.* See note on Matt. viii. 4. In this case Jesus did not exert his healing power while the afflicted were present. But, by commanding them to go before the priests for examination, he gave them

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus, answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

18 There are not found that re-

assurances that they should be healed, as in fact they were, while they were on the way, or, *as they went*. The miracle was the more remarkable, on that account. Strong faith was necessary on the part of the lepers, to commence their journey under such circumstances; for they might have supposed, if Jesus could and would heal them, he would do so, according to his usual custom, while present with them. Yet they seem to have felt confident of relief, and obeyed his word. ¶ *The priests*. "That is, to one of the priests; or the plural number may be used because among the lepers was one Samaritan, who ought to approach a Samaritan priest.—Jesus commands the Jews to go to Jerusalem, and the Samaritan to Mount Gerizim."—*Rosenmüller*.

15. *Turned back*. One of the lepers, thus cleansed, was so overpowered with joy and gratitude, that he could not refrain from turning back, and expressing his thankfulness to Jesus, and to that God by whose power he accomplished such marvellous works, before he went to the priest for legal purification.

16. *He was a Samaritan*. It is implied that the others were not Samaritans. Perhaps it was one design of this miracle, to exhibit the fact, that the Samaritans had good hearts as the Jews, who so much despised and hated them.

17. *Where are the nine?* So far as the narrative shows, they had *literally* obeyed the command of Jesus, and were now on their way to the priests. But, though he had not commanded them to return him thanks for his kindness, neither had he forbidden it; and his question indicates that he regarded their conduct as an evidence of ingratitude, or, at the least, of improper forgetfulness. This is an example of what often occurs. When men are in distress, they

turned to give glory to God, *save* this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

are ready to call on God for relief. In sickness, in peril, in apprehension of the loss of friends, or in any extremity, they *lift up their voices*, as did the lepers, and beseech God to have mercy. But after they have received succor, how few are careful to render due acknowledgments to the Giver of all good!

18. *Save this stranger*. Or, foreigner. He was not a countryman of Jesus, as the others were. Yet he alone, of the whole number, manifested the gratitude of his heart. And Jesus called attention to this fact, to impress more forcibly on the minds of his auditors the lesson he designed to convey. See note on ver. 16.

19. *Arise*. That is, from the ground, where he had hitherto remained prostrate, after the Eastern fashion, giving thanks and glorifying God. The same word is used here, as in Luke xv. 18. See the note. ¶ *Go thy way*. Probably to the priests, as before directed. This he must do, before he could be readmitted to the society of his friends. See note on ver. 14. ¶ *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. See note on Mark v. 34. His faith or confidence in Jesus induced him to ask relief; he had obtained it, and was whole. "On account of the faith which thou hast reposed in me, I have healed thee."—*Rosenmüller*.

20. *He was demanded*. That is, was interrogated; the inquiry was made of him by the Pharisees. ¶ *When the kingdom of God should come*. That is, when the reign of the Messiah should commence; for by this phrase they were accustomed to denote that period. See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *The kingdom of God cometh not, &c.* This phrase, with what follows in ver. 21, has been very generally understood as descriptive of the kingdom of God which John proclaimed to be at hand, Matt.

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

22 And he said unto the disci-

iii. 2; or the spiritual dominion of the Messiah in the hearts of men; and the idea embraced in it has been considered similar to that which is illustrated in the parables of the imperceptible growth of grain, and of the mustard seed, Mark iv. 26—32; namely, that the growth of grace in the heart is gradual, and not a subject of observation; not a sudden outbreking of flame, like signs from heaven, but a progressive illumination of the mind, and purification of the affections. The interpretation given by Lightfoot seems more reasonable, and much better harmonizes with what follows:—"The kingdom of God, or of heaven, hath especially a two-fold distinct sense in the Holy Scriptures. In some places, it signifies the propagation of the gospel by the Messiah and his followers, and that especially amongst the Gentiles; in other places, it denotes the Messiah's victory and vengeance upon the Jews, the enemies of this gospel. But in the Jewish schools, this was their conceit of him;—that when he came, he should cut off all those nations, that obeyed not his, that is, the Jewish, law; redeeming Israel from the Gentile yoke, establishing a kingdom and age amongst them, that should be crowned with all kind of delights whatever. In this they were miserably deceived, that they thought the Gentiles were first to be destroyed by him, and then that he himself would reign amongst the Israelites: which, in truth, fell out just contrary; he was first to overthrow Israel, and then to reign amongst the Gentiles. It is easy to conceive, in what sense the Pharisees propounded that question, 'when the kingdom of God should come;' that is, when all those glorious things should be accomplished, which they expected from the Messiah; and, consequently, we may as well conceive from the texture of his discourse, in what sense our Saviour made his reply:—You inquire when the Messiah will come; his coming will be as in the days of Noah, and as in the days of Lot. For as, when Noah entered the ark, the world perished by a deluge, and as, when Lot went out of Sodom, those five cities were overthrown, 'so

ples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed.' So that it is evident, he speaks of the kingdom of God in that sense, as it signifies that dreadful revenge he would ere long take of that provoking nation and city of the Jews. The kingdom of God will come, when Jerusalem shall be made like *Sodom*, ver. 29, when it shall be made a *carcass*, ver. 37. It is plain to every eye, that the cutting off of that place and nation is emphatically called 'his kingdom,' and 'his coming in glory.' Nor, indeed, without reason; for before he wasted the city and subverted that nation, he had subdued all nations under the empire and obedience of the gospel; according to what he foretold, 'that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world, and then should the end [of Jerusalem] come.' And when he had obtained his dominion amongst the Gentiles, what then remained towards the consummation of his kingdom and victories, but to cut off his enemies the Jews, who would not that he should rule over them? Of this 'kingdom of God' he speaks in this place, not answering according to that vain apprehension the Pharisee had when he propounded the question, but according to the thing itself and the truth of it. There are two things, he saith, of 'this kingdom:—(1.) That it comes not 'with observation.' Not but that it might be seen and conspicuous, but that they would not see and observe it. Which security and supineness of theirs, he both foretells and taxeth, in other places, once and again. (2.) He further tells them, 'this kingdom of God is within you;' you are the scene of these triumphs. And, whereas your expectancies are of that kind, that you say, behold here a token of the Messiah in the subduing of such a nation, and behold there in the subduing of another; they will be all in vain, for 'it is within you;' within and upon your own nation, that these things must be done. I would lay the emphasis in the word *you*, when commonly it is laid in *within*."

22. *The days will come.* The time is approaching. The reference is to the

23 And they shall say to you, See here! or, See there! go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were

given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all:

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, he which shall

same period which is denoted by the coming of the kingdom of God, when the divine power should be manifested in the destruction of that guilty and rebellious race. See also Matt. xxi. 40—45; Luke xix. 14, 27. ¶ *One of the days of the Son of man.* Or, of the Messiah. The Jews expected the Messiah would grant deliverance from temporal bondage and distress; that he would destroy their enemies, and grant them peace, prosperity, and national splendor and glory. See the preceding note. In the period of awful calamity, which was near, they would most anxiously desire relief; they would then desire to see the advent of the expected deliverer, to turn away the impending destruction, and save them from the hands of their enemies. ¶ *Ye shall not see it.* No such temporal deliverance may be expected. Sentence of destruction has been pronounced against this ungodly nation, and it will be executed.

23, 24. See notes on Matt. xxiv. 23—27.

25. *Suffer many things.* That is, must be persecuted, mocked, scourged, and crucified. It was necessary that the nation should fill its cup of iniquity, before the full retribution was rendered. Matt. xxiii. 32—36. This they did, by crucifying the Lord Jesus, and persecuting and slaying his disciples. It is here intimated, that the *coming of the kingdom of God* was not immediately at hand, though it was not far off.

26, 27. See note on Matt. xxiv. 37—39.

28—30. *In the days of Lot.* See Gen.

chap. xix. He dwelt among a dissolute and depraved people; though they were less hardened in iniquity than the Jews. Matt. xi. 23. They were not apprehensive of danger, but continued their usual avocations, as if they were in perfect security. Yet suddenly and unexpectedly, on the *same day that Lot went out of Sodom*, destruction came on the place and its inhabitants. ¶ *Rained fire and brimstone from heaven.* See Gen. xix. 24, 25. It is generally understood, that Sodom and the other cities of the plain were destroyed by a volcanic eruption, which so changed the face of the country, that the Dead Sea now occupies the former site of those cities. The fire, bursting from the earth with a violence which caused it to ascend to a great height, and then falling on the devoted cities, would have the appearance of descending from heaven. ¶ *Even thus shall it be in the day, &c.* The point of resemblance is evidently the suddenness, the unexpectedness, of the calamity. Jesus frequently referred to this fact; comparing his *coming* to that of a thief in the night, Matt. xxiv. 42—44, when men were unprepared. As suddenly and as unexpectedly as destruction came on Sodom, so suddenly and unexpectedly should it befall Jerusalem. And such proved to be the fact. For, after the city was surrounded by the enemy, the Christians having escaped by obeying the instructions of Jesus, and after the fire, and sword, and famine, had occasioned the sorest distress, yet the unbelieving Jews persisted to the last in the opinion.

be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two *women* shall be grinding

that the city could not be destroyed. See note on Matt. xxiv. 37—39.

31. See note on Matt. xxiv. 17, 18.

32. *Remember Lot's wife.* See Gen. xix. 26. To impress on the minds of his disciples more forcibly and vividly the necessity of haste, in avoiding this sudden calamity which should overwhelm the city and nation, Jesus refers to an event connected with the destruction of Sodom. Lot and his family were warned to escape; and they were commanded to go in such extreme haste as not even to look back. His wife disobeyed, and perished. The record says she "became a pillar of salt." This is variously explained by commentators. But the only material point is, that she forfeited her life, by delaying her flight, contrary to the divine commandment; and the disciples were cautioned, that similar disastrous consequences might follow any delay on their part. "She looked back, she delayed; perhaps she desired to take something with her; and God made her a monument of his displeasure. Jesus directed his disciples, when they saw the calamities coming upon the Jews, to flee to the mountains. Matt. xxiv. 16. He here charges them to be in haste, not to look back, not to delay; but to escape quickly, and to remember that, by delaying, the wife of Lot lost her life."—*Barnes*.

33. See note on Matt. x. 39.

34—36. See note on Matt. xxiv. 40, 41.

37. See note on Matt. xxiv. 23. ¶ *The body.* "The dead body, or the carcass, as in Matt. xxiv. 23. The meaning is, that wheresoever the Jews

together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AND he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men

shall be found, the conquering armies will meet with them and destroy them." — *Pearce*. Eagles are accustomed to flock together wherever a dead body may be found in the wilderness. The Jews were dead in sin. It might be expected that the executioners of God's vengeance would be concentrated where the greatest amount of wickedness was gathered.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1—8. This parable and its application have been understood by many, to inculcate the duty of frequent and persevering prayer, generally. But, however true it be that *all* "men ought always to pray, and not to faint," I apprehend the parable does not primarily or directly refer to that fact. It had a special design, as is evident, both from the connexion in which it stands, and from the application made by Jesus himself. He designed to encourage his disciples, to bear their approaching trials patiently, and to cherish an unwavering confidence that God would grant deliverance in due season. "The words are a continuation of the discourse related in the preceding chapter, which is here rather inopportunistically interrupted by the division into chapters. There is in these words and the following parable, a particular reference to the distress and trouble they were soon to meet with from their persecutors, which would render the duties of prayer, patience, and perseverance, peculiarly seasonable."—*Campbell*. By overlooking this very material point, which is sufficiently obvious from the whole construction of the passage, many commentators have erroneously inter-

ought always to pray, and not to faint ;

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man.

preted the parable in a general sense, instead of that particular sense in which our Lord expressly applied it.

1. *To this end.* There is nothing in the original, answering to these words ; yet they are not improperly inserted, to make the sentence more complete. It is an antiquated form of expression, however, now seldom used ; it means, *for this purpose, or, with this design ;* in this place, it has the force of *to show*. ¶ *Always to pray, and not to faint.* Or, not to become weary or discouraged. It is written that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Prov. xiii. 12. The early disciples were men sharing the common infirmities of humanity ; and they, like others, were in danger of losing their confidence, and despairing of deliverance, because the blessing was long delayed. It is to be presumed, that the disciples generally expected the Messiah would very soon establish his kingdom, and grant his followers full relief from all the inconveniences which they suffered ; this was certainly true, in regard to the apostles. See Luke xxiv. 21 ; Acts i. 6. Jesus knew that the day of deliverance was not only of a character different from their anticipations, but that it was more remote than they expected. Forty years were to elapse, during which the disciples were to remain exposed to the persecuting rage of the Jews, before they would be fully avenged in the utter destruction of the oppressive power. Meantime, they were in danger of becoming discouraged. This danger is frequently intimated, both by our Lord and by his apostles. To dissuade them from despondence and discouragement at this long delay, and to inspire them with unfaltering confidence that God would assuredly grant deliverance in good time ; in short, to encourage them to maintain constantly a prayerful spirit, and such confidence in the divine faithfulness that they should pray always in faith, not doubting that their prayer should be answered, this parable was uttered by their Master.

2. *A judge.* One whose duty it was, both to expound the law and to cause

3 And there was a widow in that city ; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while :

its just and equitable enforcement. ¶ *Feared not God, &c.* It was the design of Jesus to describe an "unjust judge ;" and he completed the portrait by depicting two characteristic features. He who fears not God, nor regards man, is capable of any species of injustice or wickedness. Jethro described good judges, both in skill and moral endowments, when he advised Moses to select "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," to assist him in dispensing justice to the children of Israel. Exo. xviii. 21.

3. *Avenge me of mine adversary.* Campbell renders the passage, "Do me justice on my adversary ;" but he adds this remark : "The English verb *to avenge* denotes either *to revenge* or *to punish* ; the last especially, when God is spoken of as the avenger. The Greek verb signifies also *to judge a cause*, and to defend the injured judicially from the injurious person. The word *avenge*, therefore, does not exactly hit the sense of the original in ver. 3, although in the application of the parable, ver. 7, it answers better than any other term. The literal sense is so manifest, and the connexion in the things spoken of is so close, that the change of the word in translating does not hurt perspicuity." The case supposed was peculiarly fitted to express the condition of the disciples. A widow,—the emblem of helplessness, especially among the Jews, being generally poor, and often oppressed, even by those who were bound to protect them, Matt. xxiii. 14,—appeals to the judge of the city, to protect her against a powerful adversary, and desires that his power to oppress may be taken away. The disciples were "as sheep in the midst of wolves," Matt. x. 16 ; they were exposed to the hatred and violent abuse of their adversaries, manifested in imprisonments, scourgings, and, in some cases, destruction of life. They were assured, that, when the Son of man should come, they should be delivered from the hands of their adversaries, and the adversaries should be punished. For this event they were

but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man ;

5 Yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

instructed to hope, and to pray. And though the trial of their patience might be *long*, yet they were to pray always, and not to be discouraged.

4. *He would not for a while.* The reason is obvious ; he regarded not the suffering condition of the widow ; he had no love of justice, or reverence for God. It was natural that he should neglect his duty, and suffer iniquity to prevail.

5. *Because this widow troubleth me, &c.* Here is given the reason why he listened to her complaint and rendered justice. Her importunity had become troublesome, and he feared it would be more so ; and therefore, though he neither feared God nor regarded man, he resolved, for the sake of escaping a disagreeable annoyance, to grant the widow's request. It is well, that, when men throw off all moral restraint, like this judge, God does not permit them to divest themselves of natural feelings ; for though they may not be moved by appeals to their conscience, they can be prompted to the performance of duty by being made uncomfortable.

6. *Hear what the unjust judge saith.* Observe what effect was produced on him by importunity, though he had no regard for justice. Our Lord here reasons from the less to the greater. If justice might be obtained from such an unjust wretch, if supplicants need not despair, when their case was so unpromising, much more should the disciples have confidence in their heavenly Father, who knew their wants before they mentioned them, and was more ready to bestow, than they to ask.

7. *Shall not God avenge, &c.* That is, while you believe that an unjust judge can be moved to do justice, can you doubt the perfect willingness of God to execute righteousness and judgment ? The force of the argument depends on the contrast of character. The only point, in which the character of the two corresponds, is, that both sustained the office of judge. Beyond

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ?

8 I tell you that he will avenge

this, the difference is wide as between light and darkness. See note on Luke xi. 5—8. ¶ *His own elect.* The disciples are often styled the elect. Matt. xxiv. 24, 31 ; Mark xiii. 20. The word means *selected*, or *chosen*. Such were the disciples who are here specially denoted. They were chosen for a special purpose, John xv. 16. The same word is also applied to all those who are chosen of God to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. ¶ *Though he bear long with them.* The simple idea is, though the execution of justice be delayed beyond expectation. The form of the expression is in conformity to the parable. God would grant the mercy which his children, *day and night*, or constantly and uniformly, desired. He might not, and would not, manifest himself so soon as they expected ; to them, the time would seem long ; their faith would be put to a severe trial ; yet they need not faint or be discouraged, for God is true and faithful.

8. *I tell you.* Here Jesus positively asserts the fact which is necessarily implied in his previous interrogation. ¶ *He will avenge them speedily.* The disciples are here assured, that their hopes should not be disappointed, but that deliverance should come in due time. And although the period might seem long, as indeed it was, compared with the term of human life, yet, compared with the whole course of time, it was very short, and would speedily elapse. That this deliverance was connected with the terrible judgment about to be executed on their oppressors, almost all commentators agree. ¶ *Shall he find faith on the earth ?* Or, in Judea ; for as the events before mentioned had particular reference to this region, we may properly understand *earth* in this limited sense. Campbell translates the phrase, "Will he find this belief in the land ?" and adds :—"There is a close connexion in all that our Lord says on any topic of conversation, which rarely escapes an attentive

them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake this parable

reader. If in this, as is very probable, he refers to the destruction impending over the Jewish nation, as the judgment of heaven for their rebellion against God, in rejecting and murdering the Messiah, and in persecuting his adherents, *tēn pistin*, (τῆς πίστεως,) must be understood to mean *this belief*, or the belief of the particular truth he had been inculcating, namely, that God will, in due time, avenge his elect, and signally punish their oppressors; and *tēn gēn* (τῆς γῆς) must mean *the land*, to wit, Judea. The words may be translated either way; but the latter evidently gives them a more definite meaning, and unites them more closely with those that preceded." In this exposition, Barnes very fully concurs.

9—14. Having spoken of the duty incumbent on his disciples, to pray fervently and confidently, not doubting the faithfulness of God, Jesus added a parable concerning the spirit in which prayer should be offered. Whether the parable have more than this general connexion with the preceding conversation, is perhaps doubtful. Nevertheless, it may have been designed to illustrate the intimation in ver. 8, that the coming of the Son of man, to avenge his disciples and overthrow their oppressors, would be unexpected; that he would not find the Jews believing or anticipating any such disaster. And the reason is suggested; they believed themselves righteous; they supposed that a scrupulous conformity to the ceremonial law was sufficient; and they expected, when the Messiah should appear, he would reward them for their righteousness, in which they supposed themselves so much to excel *other men*, instead of punishing them for their ungodliness, of which they by no means accounted themselves guilty. Such an application of the parable, considering the connexion in which it stands, will not probably appear forced or violently strained.

9. *This parable unto certain.* Rather, *concerning certain persons.* The Greek preposition, used here, is of very various signification; "when joined with *speaking*, it often means *concerning*,

unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the

and indicates the real object of the discourse."—*Rosenmüller*. Or, we may suppose the parable was addressed directly to the Pharisees; in which case, the common translation expresses the idea. ¶ *Which trusted in themselves, &c.* Who imagined; who were persuaded; who believed. Or perhaps we should rather understand this word, as in Luke xi. 22, to mean *confiding in*, or *relying upon*; see also 2 Cor. i. 9; Gal. v. 10; Phil. ii. 24; iii. 4; 2 Thess. iii. 4; where the same original word occurs. In this case, the meaning of the phrase is similar to the apostolic testimony concerning the same class of persons:—"They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 3. They trusted in themselves, as being righteous, or trusted in their own righteousness; thus feeling assured that, whomever else the Messiah should destroy at his coming, *they* should receive distinguishing marks of his favor; and this blindness to their true moral condition would prevent them from crediting the warnings of Jesus, or anticipating the calamity which he foretold. See ver. 8. ¶ *And despised others.* This characteristic of the Pharisees is visible everywhere. This caused them to murmur, when Jesus received sinners and ate with them, Luke xv. 2; to doubt his prophetic character, because he allowed a sinner to touch him; Luke vii. 39; and the same spirit of scornful contempt was manifested, when the common people listened gladly to his words, John vii. 47—49. No class of men ever manifested a more overweening confidence in their own righteousness, or a more utter contempt for others, than they did. The same characteristics are still discoverable, wherever self-righteousness exists. For it should be observed, that the righteousness, of which the Pharisees were so proud, was not true and genuine, but spurious and false; not founded on love to God and love to man, and a conscientious performance of the correspondent duties.



temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men

but on a punctilious observance of forms and ceremonies. See Matt. xxiii. 14, 23, 25, 27.

10. *The temple.* The scene is laid at Jerusalem, in the temple dedicated to the worship of God. ¶ *Pharisee.* See note on Matt. iii. 7. *Publican.* See note on Matt. v. 46. These two characters are aptly chosen, to illustrate the truth which our Lord designed to enforce. Perhaps no class of men was more heartily despised by the self-righteous Pharisees, than the publicans. And yet our Lord elsewhere assures us, that, with all their imperfection and sinfulness, the publicans were more fit for the kingdom of heaven, than were the Pharisees. Matt. xxi. 31, 32. These two persons are represented as offering prayer, each after his own fashion and in accordance with his own spirit, in the temple; that is, in the court which they might enter. See note on Matt. xxi. 12.

11. *Stood and prayed thus with himself.* Or, stood by himself and prayed. Some critics doubt whether the original will bear this transposition; others are confident that it will. It is certainly characteristic of the Pharisee, that he should stand alone, partly that he might not be polluted by contact with a sinner, and partly that he might be a more conspicuous object of observation. See Matt. vi. 5. ¶ *God, I thank thee.* He had the grace to thank God, if he did it honestly and sincerely, for the superior holiness he supposed himself to possess. He was not condemned for thanking God; but for that wrong estimate he made of his own moral character. We are bound to bless God for every favor he bestows. And if he grant us more light than others enjoy, or enable us to forsake sin and cleave to godliness in a greater degree than others, or indeed in any degree whatever, we should be thankful for his great mercy. Yet we should be cautious, that we do not mistake pride for gratitude, or boasting for thanksgiving. This was the fault of the Pharisee; and, moreover, he misjudged his own character, for he was not actually more pure than others.

are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing

¶ *That I am not as other men.* His actual spirit is here manifested. His thankfulness, such as it was, related not to his own condition, in itself, but to the difference between himself and others, wherein he supposed himself to have preëminence. This boastful and haughty spirit is sufficiently disagreeable anywhere; but it is especially disgusting in the house of God, where men should be humble, comparing their own imperfection with infinite purity, rather than proud, comparing themselves among themselves. 2 Cor. x. 12. He confesses no sins of his own, but refers to the sins of others in detail, of which he claims to be innocent. ¶ *Extortioners, unjust.* Extortion differs from injustice, in this; that extortion is a single form of injustice, while injustice itself is multiform. It is observable, that the vices which the Pharisee thus disavowed were the peculiarly besetting sins of his class. Matt. xxiii. 23—25. ¶ *Adulterers.* See notes on Matt. v. 27—32. ¶ *Or even as this publican.* He was not content to boast of his own goodness; but condemned the publican, whom he *despised*, but whom God regarded in a different manner, ver. 14. "Here he offends, (1.) that he concludes himself good, because he is not so bad as other men; whereas he should have done this only from the evidence of his own sincerity in heart and actions; it being only from this approving of our own works that we can have rejoicing in ourselves, and not in another, Gal. vi. 4; (2.) in judging so ill of others, many of whom he could have no certain knowledge of, and particularly in his judgment on this *publican*, from whose submissive gesture and penitential actions, he might have charitably concluded, that he came to the temple with a true penitent heart."—*Whitby*. To which may be added, that he judged of his own works by a wrong standard,—by the law of ceremonies, rather than the moral law.

12. In this verse, the Pharisee enumerates the particulars in which his active godliness consisted; for he had before only professed his superiority in being free from the sins of which others

afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went

were guilty. After his pompous introduction, and his supercilious exaltation of himself above others, "you would naturally ask, what reason was there for all this triumph, or what foundation could he have to insult in this manner over the infirmities of mankind, or even those of the humble publican who stood before him? Why, says he, 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' Truly, a very indifferent account of himself, and if that was all he had to offer in his own behalf, God knows, it was but a weak foundation to support so much arrogance and self-conceit; because the observance of both the one and the other of these ordinances might be supposed well enough to be consistent with the most profligate of life and manners."—*Sterne*. ¶ *I fast twice in the week*. It is said that the Pharisees were accustomed to fast regularly on the second and fifth days in the week, answering to our Monday and Thursday. "On those days they assembled in their synagogues to public prayers."—*Lightfoot*. How much actual godliness was manifested by performing this duty, as the Pharisee claims to have done, may be seen by our Lord's testimony, *Matt. vi. 16*. ¶ *I give tithes of all that I possess*. The payment of tithes, in itself, was a duty required by the law. He was not blameworthy for having performed this duty; but for resting in this as an equivalent for more important duties which he had neglected. See *Matt. xxiii. 23*. It follows, that a man might fast and pay tithes, with all imaginable scrupulosity, and yet, at heart, be full of hypocrisy and iniquity,—which was the fact in regard to this Pharisee, taken as a representative of his class. Such was he, who boasted of his superior sanctity.

13. *Standing afar off*. Some say, at a distance from the Pharisee; others, at a greater distance from the most holy place; in either case, manifesting a spirit of humility. He would not intrude on the Pharisee, whose feelings he understood and was willing to spare, though he could not respect them; he would not thrust himself, as it were, into

down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

the Divine presence, but humbly stood in a remote part of the court, and there gave expression to his penitence. ¶ *Would not lift up*, &c. Conscious of his own imperfection and guilt, he cast his eyes on the ground; the natural expression of humility. ¶ *Smote upon his breast*. Among the Jews, as others, smiting on the breast was a common method of expressing grief and penitence. ¶ *God be merciful to me, a sinner*. This is one of the most comprehensive prayers, ever uttered. It includes adoration, confession, and supplication. God is addressed as the being on whom all are dependent for every blessing; confession of sin is made; and mercy implored, such as a sinner needs. How different this, from the prayer, if prayer it may be called, of the Pharisee. No odious comparisons are made between himself and others; but looking only into his own heart, and perceiving his need of divine mercy, he implores that mercy from the fountain of grace.

14. *I tell you*. Jesus did not leave the Pharisees to form their own conclusions concerning the parable. That they might not, by any possibility, mistake his meaning, he announced it distinctly. *I tell you*, says he, that the publican was more worthy than the other; that his prayer was more acceptable to God; and that he received a richer blessing into his own bosom. ¶ *Justified*. "That is, esteemed or accepted as righteous in the sight of God."—*Pearce*. *To justify*, is to declare just, or to account as just. In this place, the idea may be included, that the publican departed with a more distinct impression of the divine favor to him, than the Pharisee. ¶ *Everyone that exalteth*, &c. See notes on *Matt. xxiii. 12*, and *Luke xiv. 11*. But besides the assertion of this general truth, our Lord seems to have designed a special application of it to the subject of his discourse. He had foretold his coming in power and glory, in the preceding chapter, ver. 20—37; in the commencement of this chapter, he declared, by parable, that when he thus came, he

15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them : but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good ? none is good, save one, *that is* God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery,

would deliver his disciples and punish their oppressors, ver. 1—8 ; but intimated, in ver. 8, that this revelation of himself as a dispenser of justice would be unexpected to them who should then be punished ; and the reason why it would be unexpected was, that they considered themselves the peculiar people of God,—the objects of special favor rather than of punishment. To remove this cause of unbelief, this parable seems to be designed ; evidently teaching that the kind of righteousness, in which the Pharisees trusted, was nothing worth, in the sight of God ; and that even the publicans, whom they so heartily despised, were more acceptable, or justified, than themselves. Thus, says he, every one that exalteth himself, as you and your associates do, shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself, as penitent publicans and sinners do, shall be exalted. In other words : you trust in your own righteousness, and expect to be highly distinguished by the Messiah at his coming ; and consequently you will not entertain the belief that punishment awaits you ; you *despise* publicans and sinners, who become my disciples ; you will not believe that they shall be objects of favor, when the kingdom of God shall be manifested. I tell you, your self-confidence is vain ; you wrongly estimate your own character ; your righteousness is spurious, and your

Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now, when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing : sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful : for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than

pride abominable. You cannot thus escape the impending calamity. It shall certainly fall upon your heads, abasing your haughty spirits ; while those whom you now consider so much your inferiors, whom you *despise*, shall be exalted, and made subjects of the distinguishing favor of God. Thus there appears a unity of purpose in the whole discourse, and the parable is invested with additional interest.

15, 16. See notes on Matt. xix. 13, 14. See also Mark x. 13, 14. In these verses, with the next, we have an additional lesson, enforcing humility. We have also the cheering assurance that *infants* and *little children* are dear in the sight of God. Mark says the kind-hearted Redeemer "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark x. 16. Let not parents then fear to trust the tender objects of their affection in his hands. Although their hearts may bleed for their own loss, let them be cheered and consoled by the belief that Jesus will enfold the departed ones in his arms, and love them, and bless them forever. Let them never, for one moment, believe that he who blessed children on earth will be less kind to them in heaven.

17. See notes on Matt. xviii. 3, 4. See also Mark x. 15.

18—30. See notes on Matt. xix. 16—30. See also Mark x. 17—31.

for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard *it*, said, Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.

28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

31 ¶ Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on;

33 And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was

hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

35 ¶ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging;

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38 And he cried, saying, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

40 And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42 And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God.

31—33. See notes on Matt. xx. 17—19. See also Mark x. 32—34.

34. *They understood none of these things*, &c. It may seem surprising to us, that when Jesus repeatedly and so distinctly announced his approaching sufferings and death, his disciples did not understand his meaning; that it was hid from them, or obscure to their apprehension. But it should be remembered, that, in common with their countrymen, they expected the Messiah would reign on the earth with power and great glory. They believed Jesus was the Messiah, and expected he would thus reign. Moreover, they believed the Messiah would never die; and therefore, when Jesus referred to his approaching death, they supposed he

intended some severe trial, but understood not that he would literally die. See note, end of Matt. xxviii.

35—43. See notes on Matt. xx. 29—34, and Mark x. 46—52. The accounts of this miracle differ from each other, in two respects: (1.) Luke says it was performed as Jesus "was come nigh unto Jericho;" Matthew and Mark, as he was departing from that city. (2.) Luke and Mark name only one blind man, while Matthew speaks of two. But these differences are not such as to affect the credibility of the narratives, or create a doubt as to their substantial accuracy. This matter is more fully considered in the notes on the parallel passages.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

2 And behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the

## CHAPTER XIX.

1. *Entered and passed through Jericho.* "Rather, having entered into Jericho was passing through it. He had not passed through it, because the house of Zaccheus, where he was to abide, ver. 5, was in it."—*Pearce*. "When Jesus had entered and was passing through Jericho."—*Campbell*.

2. *A man named Zaccheus.* He seems to have been a Jew, though many of the publicans were foreigners. His name is Hebrew, and Jesus calls him a "son of Abraham," ver. 9. The office of publican or tax-gatherer was very odious to the Jews. Nevertheless, a few of their own nation ventured to assume the duties of this unwelcome office. Matthew was a publican. Matt. ix. 9; x. 3. ¶ *Chief among the publicans.* His precise rank of office does not appear. Some suppose he had the general charge of collecting the revenue, receiving it from his deputies, who collected it in the first instance, and transmitting it to the treasury of the Roman government. Others, with more seeming probability, suppose he became responsible to the government for a definite amount of revenue, in consideration of which he was allowed to collect, for his own benefit, all the revenue which might accrue in his district for a year, or other specified period. Such officers are appointed in some countries, even now, and called "farmers of the revenue." A similar office formerly existed in this country. If such were the office of Zaccheus, it is readily seen that he had a better opportunity to become *rich*, and stronger temptations to oppress, ver. 8, than if he had only been a receiver-general, holden to account for all which he received, except a stated salary. In either case, he would employ deputies to make the collections; and in this respect, he would be styled a *chief* or

press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him; for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house.

principal publican. ¶ *And he was rich.* This circumstance may be mentioned, to indicate that he had been dishonest, and acquired unrighteous gains; or possibly, because it was almost the only instance in which a rich man openly espoused the cause of Jesus, and therefore worthy of special notice.

3. *Sought to see Jesus, who he was.* He seems, at first, to have been prompted by mere curiosity. He had doubtless heard much of Jesus. He had a strong desire to know what was the personal appearance of the individual who had performed such mighty works, and produced such an impression on the public mind by his language. His curiosity was natural; but not, so far as appears, worthy of special praise or blame. ¶ *For the press.* Or, crowd. Many flocked around Jesus, as usual on such occasions; so that Zaccheus, not being a tall man, could not obtain a satisfactory view.

4. *Sycamore-tree.* See note on Luke xvii. 6. By attaining this elevated position, he was able to look over the heads of the multitude, and, moreover, he thus himself became a conspicuous object of observation, and was noticed by Jesus, as he passed. It often happens, that, from actions, trivial in themselves, momentous consequences result, which enter not into the previous calculations of men. Thus it was with Zaccheus. He desired to see Jesus, and ascended a tree; he thus attracted attention, was addressed by the Lord, and salvation came to his house, ver. 9.

5. *Abide at thy house.* "Perhaps because the Sabbath was near, when he might not lawfully pursue his journey."—*Rosenmüller*. Jesus doubtless knew his proposition would be cordially met, as in ver. 30, 31. He was not accustomed to intrude, or to wrest from others an unwilling hospitality.

6. *Received him joyfully.* Zaccheus

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

seems not to have expected this honorable notice and attention. But Jesus rightly judged that he would esteem it a favor to have him abide at his house, during pleasure.

7. *When they saw it.* That is, the Pharisees, as we may judge from their conduct. ¶ *Murmured.* According to their usual custom, they found fault, expressed dissatisfaction, because Jesus did not lavish on themselves exclusive marks of his favor. ¶ *A man that is a sinner.* So mortally did they detest the idea of paying taxes or tribute, that they accounted every man a sinner who was concerned in their collection. Moreover, the tax-gatherers, as a class, seem to have been guilty of oppression, exacting more than was appointed, Luke iii. 13; perhaps provoked thereto by the abuse they received from the people, and by their attempts to evade such payments as were just and legal.

8. *Stood, and said unto the Lord.* Rather, standing, said unto the Lord. This address of Zaccheus is not to be understood as uttered in the street; for it was said that Jesus *had gone* to be his guest, ver. 7. Very probably he had listened to the instructions of our Lord, and had been persuaded to break off his sins by righteousness; and the evangelist, omitting the conversation, only narrates the result. However this be, Zaccheus manifested a disposition to produce the appropriate fruits of repentance, thus giving evidence that his heart had been moved by the power of truth. ¶ *Half of my goods I give to the poor.* This was a much larger proportion than was required by the law; only one fifth was the highest amount demanded. ¶ *If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation.* Campbell translates, "if in aught I have wronged any man," and sufficiently justifies his translation. The original word, to be sure, has allusion to a particular species of wrong or oppression in regard to figs. But it is scarcely to be supposed, that in professing a design to make restitution to them who had been injured by him,

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.

Zaccheus would have confined himself to a single species of wrong; it is much more natural, to understand the phrase, in a general sense, as indicating an intention to make restitution to all whom he had wronged, in any manner whatever. ¶ *I restore him fourfold.* That is, four times as much as I have unjustly received. The law required, "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." Exo. xxii. 1. But if the guilty party would confess his sin voluntarily, then it was required that he should "recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed." Numh. v. 7. Hence it appears that Zaccheus went beyond what the law required, and, even though he confessed voluntarily, he proposed to make such restitution as was required of a convicted sheep-stealer.

Some have understood Zaccheus, in this verse, to declare what his practice had been hitherto; that he had been accustomed to make such liberal provision for the poor and ample remuneration to those whom he had injured. But this seems to me improbable. If such had been his practice, the Pharisees would not have denounced him as a sinner, even though he was a publican; for they had a very high estimation of alms, and professed a deep veneration for justice. They hated tax-gatherers, it is true; and so also they hated military commanders; for both were agents of a foreign power, and reminded them continually that they were in bondage. Yet they could speak well of a centurion, heathen and agent of the Roman government as he was, on account of the benefits he had conferred Luke vii. 4, 5; and one who had manifested so much generosity and regard for justice, as is here implied, would also be favorably regarded by them. It seems more probable that Zaccheus here announces his determination in regard to his future conduct; declaring

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come

that he would bestow half his goods upon the poor, whether justly or unjustly obtained, and so far as he could learn that he had wronged others, he would restore to the injured persons four times as much as he had taken. The original, being expressed in the present tense, may as well be understood in reference to the future as to the past; and the circumstances of the case seem to require such reference. Or, if a more strict construction be insisted on, the passage may be understood thus; the half of my goods I devote to the poor, and, to those whom I have wronged, so much as will repay them four-fold. Such was the evidence which Zaccheus gave of his penitence and reformation. According to the test prescribed by John the Baptist, these were fruits worthy of repentance. Luke iii. 8—14. He was not converted merely to ceremonies and observances, or to prescribed forms of words; but a spirit of active benevolence and regard for justice was enkindled in his heart. He was disposed thenceforth "to do justly, and to love mercy," as well as "to walk humbly with God." Mich. vi. 8. The love for his race, which had been warmed into life by the words of Jesus, was to be expressed not "in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1 John iii. 18. True conversion may more easily be discovered by the conduct of men, than by their professions. Where the conduct displays a spirit of true love towards God and towards men, we may safely believe the heart has felt the power of grace. But when the conduct manifests hatred or disregard of others, we cannot believe that conversion is genuine; for, "if a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." 1 John iv. 20.

9. *Jesus said unto him.* Rather, concerning him; the last clause of the verse indicates that Jesus was not directly addressing Zaccheus, but speaking to others concerning him. Pearce suggests that a word has been changed in the original, and that the phrase should be, *said unto them*; but there is no authority for this supposition, nor

to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jeru-

any necessity for it; the preposition *pros* (πρός) may as well be rendered concerning as unto. See note on Luke xviii. 9. ¶ *Salvation.* The work of grace had commenced in the heart of Zaccheus, and he already enjoyed salvation from sin, to some extent, as is manifest from ver. 8. Just so far as men break off their sins by righteousness, and turn to the Lord and obey his word, just so far they are saved from sin. The salvation, thus commenced on earth, is completed when men become the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. ¶ *This house.* Or, household; particular reference being had to the master of the family, as its proper representative. ¶ *A son of Abraham.* If Zaccheus was a Jew, as is generally believed, we are to understand that he had become worthy the name of *son of Abraham*; for thus was a distinction made between the worthy and unworthy. See Rom. ix. 6. The unworthy were not characteristically sons; but they attained sonship by works meet for repentance. Or if he were a Gentile, which is not probable, then the meaning is, that he was worthy to be styled a *son of Abraham* on account of his faith and conduct. Thus the apostle testifies to the Gentile converts; "if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 29. See also Matt. iii. 9.

10. See note on Matt. xviii. 11. This is added here, to convince the multitude that our Lord was engaged in the proper duty of his mission, by reclaiming sinners from the error of their ways; and that, in this particular case, his labors on the behalf of Zaccheus were justifiable, because he came into the world for the express purpose of saving sinners.

11. *Spake a parable.* A similar parable is recorded, Matt. xxv. 14—30. But that was delivered after Jesus arrived in Jerusalem; this, before. For some remarks on the character and design of this parable, see note on Matt. xxv. 21. In the parable recorded by Matthew, the effect of faithfulness or

salem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten ser-

unfaithfulness on the part of disciples is noticed. In this, another class of persons is introduced, namely, the *citizens*, representing the Jewish people who were not disciples; and the calamity which impended over them is predicted. ¶ *Because he was nigh to Jerusalem.* Jericho was only twenty miles from Jerusalem. Jesus had been travelling towards the holy city from the remote province of Galilee; and might properly be said now to be near it. ¶ *The kingdom of God should immediately appear.* Or, that the Messiah would immediately commence his visible and glorious reign on the earth. Such a temporal kingdom was expected by the Jews generally; and in this expectation the disciples fully shared. As he approached Jerusalem, their minds were more highly excited; and overlooking or misunderstanding all which he had said concerning his approaching death, they seem to have been confident that, as soon as he entered the city, he would commence his reign. Accordingly, when he rode into the city, they could not restrain their joy, but shouted, and offered homage to him as a king, ver. 36—38.

12. *A certain nobleman.* Or, prince. As used in the parable, the word denotes a king, or, at least, one who was entitled to the government of a kingdom. ¶ *Went into a far country.* It has often been remarked that much of the figurative language of our Lord was founded on the circumstances by which he was surrounded, or on customs which then prevailed. And it has been supposed, with much apparent probability, that this parable derived its peculiar form from the manner in which the kings of Judea were invested with royal authority. As that land was then a Roman province, its kings and rulers were required to go to Rome, a far country, that they might receive the kingdom from the emperor; or that their authority might be recognized

and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that

and confirmed by him. Thus Herod the Great visited Rome; and thus Archelaus, his son, soon after the birth of Jesus. The custom was familiar to the Jews; and this reference to it added life to the parable. By this nobleman or king, our Lord doubtless represented himself. By his departure to receive the kingdom, some understand his entrance into heaven, whence he returned in power and glory, about forty years afterwards, to establish his dominion and execute justice upon rebels. Others, with less probability, suppose him to indicate his visit to the Gentiles, by his spirit, whereby they were brought into his kingdom before the final catastrophe of the Jews.

13. *Ten servants.* By these are denoted the disciples or professed followers of Jesus. The number *ten* is not material to the parable, but only serves to give an appearance of life to the narrative. ¶ *Ten pounds.* This amount of money, estimated by some at about two hundred and fifty dollars, and by others at a less rate, denotes the talents and privileges which were bestowed on the disciples. ¶ *Occupy.* The original word, here used, denotes not merely to possess, but to improve, or make use of; the idea is, that the disciples were required to make a prudent and profitable use of the blessings they had received, until the Lord should return in power and great glory.

14. *His citizens hated him.* A distinct class of men is here introduced. They were not the servants of the nobleman, or those who already acknowledged him as their master; but those over whom he had the right of dominion, for the confirmation of which he was going into a far country. They represent not the disciples of our Lord, who already revered him as the Messiah, however much they mistook his true character; but the contumacious Jews, who were so much dissatisfied with his kindness to sinners, his



when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou

takest up that thou laydest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath, shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

faithfulness in rebuking iniquity in high place, and the general humility and quietness of his behavior, that they rejected him as the Messiah, and *hated him*. In short, the *servants* represent believers, and the *citizens* unbelievers, especially the Jews. ¶ *We will not have this man to reign over us*. Such was the message, which the Jews sent to Cæsar, in regard to Archelaus; and such was their state of feeling in regard to Jesus. They refused to acknowledge his Messiahship; they ridiculed and treated with contempt what they affected to consider his unfounded pretensions of dominion; see Matt. xxvii. 23—31, 42. They opposed, persecuted, and crucified him; being determined to do all in their power to prevent him from becoming their ruler. Such were the persons, to whom reference is here made, and again in ver. 27.

15. *Having received the kingdom*. Having been confirmed in the regal authority. It is implied that the kingdom lawfully belonged to the nobleman, and that his claim was recognized by the supreme head of that government. So Christ was the true and lawful

spiritual ruler of mankind, commissioned by the Father of all; but his kingdom was not visibly established, until he returned, in the clouds, with great glory, forty years after his ascension.

17. *Ten cities*. The idea is precisely the same as in Matt. xxv. 21, where it is said, "thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." The particular phrase *ten cities* corresponds with the general character or frame-work of the parable; but the simple idea is, that faithfulness should be abundantly rewarded.

22. *Thou knowest*, &c. That is, according to the servant's own account of the matter. Jesus condemned him out of his own mouth, or showed him that he was guilty even upon his own principles. As if he had said, "suppose I am such a person as you pretend, an austere, overbearing man; in such case, your conduct was improper, and you might know I should not approve it." Jesus by no means admits the truth of the allegation against him; but interrogatively or hypothetically repeats the servant's language, and convicts him of guilt by his own words.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him* *hither*.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

27. *Those mine enemies.* Having indicated the consequences of faithfulness or unfaithfulness in his disciples, our Lord here introduces the other or unbelieving class of men. See note on ver. 14. There can be no reasonable doubt that by these disaffected and inimical citizens, he designed to point out the rebellious Jews, upon whom a terrible judgment was soon to be executed. ¶ *Slay them before me.* A manifest prediction of the slaughter and destruction which befell the Jews, when their temple and nation were destroyed and the kingdom of God came with power. "Those enemies; the Jews, whom I shall shortly slay by the sword of the Romans."—*Clarke*. "Returning, he cuts off the nation of the Jews, that would not have him to reign over them."—*Lightfoot*. "This was fulfilled by the Romans, the ministers of divine vengeance against the unbelieving and refractory Jews."—*Calmet*. "But those countrymen of his, whose king by right he was, which when he was gone to be installed in his kingdom sent him that contumacious answer, ver. 14, noting the Jews that would not submit to him upon the apostles' preaching the gospel after the resurrection, being now installed in his throne, he presently commanded to be put to the sword, executed

32 And they that were sent *went* their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus; and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed be the King

as so many rebels: the fate that soon befell the Jews, after his inauguration in his kingdom, that is, his going to heaven."—*Hammond*. To the same purpose, Whitby, Pearce, and others: see Selections, sect. xliii.

28. *He went before.* Having ended his instructions, predictions, and admonitions, at or near Jericho, Jesus proceeded towards Jerusalem, to meet the trials and fate which awaited him. He did not attempt to avoid the peril. However much his sensibilities were affected, he manifested no excitement or fear, at this time, but boldly led the way to the scene of slaughter, followed by his disciples. See note on Mark x. 32.

29—40. See notes on Matt. xxi. 1—16, and Mark xi. 1—11.

37. *Descent of the mount of Olives.* From this place, Jesus had a distinct view of Jerusalem, overlooking the city from an eminence at the distance of less than two miles. As he thus approached the city from the east, beheld its splendor, and distinctly foresaw its utter ruin and the destruction of its inhabitants, soon to be accomplished, he *wept over it*, ver. 41; while his disciples rejoiced in expectation of immediate success, he bewailed the misery which must first be endured. ¶ *For all the mighty works, &c.* For the mirac-

that cometh in the name of the Lord : Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

and other evidences that Jesus was truly the Messiah, the King of Zion. They doubted not the fact that *he that should come*, (Luke vii. 19,) had come, and that he was now about to assume that temporal dominion which they supposed belonged to him ; or, in other words, that the kingdom of God should immediately appear, ver. 11. They were right, in the belief that Jesus was the Messiah ; but they mistook his proper character, and the nature of his dominion. Their acclamations, however, were not inappropriate ; for though he did not come to establish such a kingdom as they anticipated, he did establish one of infinitely greater moral grandeur, more productive of peace, more honorable to God, and more advantageous to men. Instead of delivering the Jewish nation from temporal bondage and granting them the sovereignty of the world, he delivered his followers from the slavery of sin, the bondage of corruption, and granted them dominion over their evil lusts and passions, bestowed on them the glorious liberty of the children of God, and thus made them free indeed.

40. *The stones would immediately cry out.* A strong hyperbolical expression, indicating the propriety of the joy manifested by the disciples. The birth of Jesus was announced as a subject of great joy unto all people. Luke ii. 10. He had commenced, and was now about to close, his earthly ministry ; and though his disciples misconceived the true design of his coming, yet they were sufficiently enlightened to appreciate in some measure the holiness of his character and his benevolence to mankind. He knew, moreover, that he should bestow on men richer blessings than they had conceived. And as he was now entering the place where he should exhibit the crowning evidence of his love, as the time was at hand when he should be able to say *it is finished*, it was right that he should be hailed with joyful acclamations. He would

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

not rebuke his disciples. But, in the eastern manner, he declared that if humanity should remain silent, inanimate nature would become vocal with praise ; not that the stones should be made to speak, but that praise and joy ought to be expressed, and would be expressed in some manner. He would not therefore attempt to repress this natural and proper outburst of feeling.\*

41. *Wept over it.* So full of sympathy was the bosom of our Saviour, that he could not refrain from tears, when, from the descending slope of the mount of Olives, he cast his eyes over the devoted city, and contemplated the dreadful sufferings of its guilty inhabitants. He knew they were vile and sinful ; he knew they hated him and would crucify him ; he knew their cup of iniquity would soon be filled to the brim ; and he knew that the righteous judgment of God would soon be executed upon them to the uttermost. But he did not exult in their approaching calamity ; he did not ask any aggravation of the penalty they had incurred ; on the contrary, though he knew them to be his bitterest enemies, whose rage and malice nothing but his own heart's blood could satiate, he pitied them, and wept for them ; thus manifesting the same gracious and compassionate feeling towards them, which induced him to implore the forgiveness of their sins in his dying hour. What an example for imitation ! What a vivid illustration of his own precept, " Love your enemies ! " May God ena-

\* It may not be generally known, yet such is the fact, that Cotton Mather, besides his other multifarious labors, prepared six folio manuscript volumes of annotations on the Bible, now in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society. His note on this verse is fanciful, yet it is certainly worthy to be transcribed :—" Six days after our Lord spoke these words, he was hanged upon the cross, and his disciples all of them then *held their peace*. But the stones then opened their *mouaths*, and the rocks, by rending as it should seem with a mighty noise, *cried out* against the murderers."

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, ever thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass

thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with-in thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

ble us to cherish and manifest a similar spirit, that we may be worthy disciples of our blessed Lord.

42—44. See notes on Matt. xxiii. 37—39, and Luke xiii. 34, 35.

42. *If thou hadst known, &c.* This and the following verses are descriptive of that total overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem, which was not long afterwards accomplished by the Roman armies. So evident is this, that almost all commentators agree in the interpretation. "If thou hadst known, even thou, with all thy guilt, the things that make for thy peace; if thou hadst repented, been righteous, and received the Messiah; if thou hadst not stained thy hands with the blood of the prophets, and shouldst not with that of the Son of God, then these terrible calamities would not come upon thee. But it is too late. They are hid from thine eyes. The national wickedness is too great. The cup is full. Mercy is exhausted. And Jerusalem, with all her pride and splendor, the glory of her temple, and the pomp of her service, *must perish.*"—*Barnes.*

43. *Cast a trench.* The word trench ordinarily signifies a deep groove or ditch; but as a military term, in which sense it is here used, it denotes both the ditch and the embankment formed by the materials excavated. Hence an entrenchment is the defence formed by earth, stone, or other materials, thrown up by digging; and, sometimes, a like defence formed by materials otherwise accumulated. Such was the trench or bank which was to surround the devoted city. "How exactly this was done, we learn from Josephus, saying, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army compassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side; and though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work to compass the whole city with a wall, yet, Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they in three days built a wall of thirty-

nine furlongs, having thirteen castles in it; and so cut off all hopes that any of the Jews within the city should escape."

—*Whitby.*

44. *Lay thee even with the ground, &c.* The terms in this verse might properly be interpreted as indicating only a complete and thorough destruction. Yet, by the testimony of Josephus, it appears that the event so exactly corresponded with the prediction, that the language can scarcely be considered figurative. The destruction was accomplished almost precisely according to the letter of the prediction. "Cæsar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminency, that is, Phasælus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne, and so much of the wall as enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison, as were the towers also spared, in order to demonstrate to posterity what kind of city it was, and how well fortified, which the Roman valor had subdued; but for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that *dug it up to the foundation*, that there was nothing left to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind." Jew. Wars, B. vii., ch. i., § 1. ¶ *The time of thy visitation.* The Jews were visited by Jesus, in kindness and love; but they received him not as the Messiah, nor embraced his message of truth and grace. They rejected, derided, and crucified him. His coming had been predicted by the ancient prophets, as an event fraught with blessings to mankind. And such it was; but that evil and adulterous generation,

45 And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought,

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests, and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

### CHAPTER XX.

**A**ND it came to pass, *that* on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him, with the elders,

being, as it might seem, wilfully blind, would not know or acknowledge the fact; they persisted in their contumacy and disobedience; and a most signal destruction overwhelmed them.

45, 46. See notes on Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

47. *Taught daily in the temple.* That is, during the few days which intervened between his entry into Jerusalem and his crucifixion. The lessons which he taught in the temple are recorded in the two succeeding chapters.

48. *Could not find, &c.* Could not accomplish their murderous design. See note on Matt. xxi. 46. At this time, the people believed Jesus to be a prophet, and listened to him with the deepest attention. Afterwards, they were deceived by their leaders, persuaded that he was an impostor, and induced to join in the outcry against him.

### CHAPTER XX.

1—8. See notes on Matt. xxi. 23—27. Parallel also with Mark xi. 27—33.

1. *Preached the gospel.* Even to such abandoned sinners as the Jews, Jesus preached the gospel of grace. To them he offered the benefits of his kingdom. A few believed, obeyed his

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, That they could not tell whence *it was*.

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

9 Then began he to speak to the

instructions, rejoiced in hope of future glory, and were preserved from the overflowing scourge. But the greater part remained obdurate. Their eye was evil because he was good. The leaders were losing their influence, because his teaching was so much more satisfactory and comforting than theirs to the people. And though he proposed the same grace to themselves as to others, on equal terms and in equal abundance, they lifted up the heel against him who offered them bread, and, even while he was engaged in this labor of love, plotted his destruction. Thus ungrateful were the Jews. Similar ingratitude has frequently been manifested. In all ages, there have been those who persecuted their benefactors, and repaid blessings with reproaches and injuries. Let such remember that their guilt cannot go unpunished. ¶ *Came upon him.* The original word here conveys the idea of *attacking*; the Jewish rulers not only approached Jesus, but commenced an attack upon him, by demanding what authority he had for preaching peace and doing good—for this was all which could in truth be alleged against him.

9—19. See notes on Matt. xxi. 33—46. Parallel also with Mark xii. 1—12.

people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast *him* out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What

therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

Matthew records another parable, previous to this, concerning the obedient and disobedient sons; showing that true obedience consists not in professions, but in actions,—not in word, but in deed.

10. *At the season.* That is, at the season of ripe fruits, or at the time of harvest. The same word occurs here which is translated *time* in Mark xi. 13, and may serve to illustrate that passage. See note on Matt. xxi. 18, 19.

20—38. See notes on Matt. xxii. 15—33. Parallel also with Mark xii. 13—27.

20. *Feign themselves just men.* Open opposition having failed, ver. 1—8, and the people not being yet prepared to countenance violent measures against Jesus, ver. 19, the rulers adopted a different method of attack. They endeavored to obtain somewhat upon which they might found an accusation against him to the governor, by throwing him off his guard. Accordingly they sent

*spies*, men as wicked as themselves and as desirous to entangle him in conversation, who should assume the demeanor of just men and honest inquirers; these were to question him on certain matters concerning which the people were divided in opinion, with the hope that, by his answers, he would offend at least one of the parties, and thus lose a portion of his credit and influence. To such disgraceful methods will some men stoop, to accomplish their base purposes. It has been said that hypocrisy is a tribute which vice pays to virtue. The truth of this saying is exemplified in the present instance. Open enmity and ungodliness had been unavailing. Now, the mask of virtue is assumed, so that Jesus, believing the questions were proposed in good faith, and with an honest and earnest desire to communicate information to all sincere inquirers, might unguardedly give them an advantage over him. But he was proof

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of *any*, but teachest the way of God truly :

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cesar, or no ?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me ?

24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it ? They answered and said, Cesar's.

25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cesar the things which be Cesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people : and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, (which deny that there is any resurrection,) and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die,

against all the wiles of the adversary ; and he avoided the snare, so artfully prepared.

35. *Accounted worthy to obtain, &c.* "Shall be honored to share in the resurrection and the other world."—*Campbell*. It is insisted by some, that the language used clearly implies that some shall not be *accounted worthy*, or be *honored*, to share in the resurrection. If this were so, it would follow that some shall never be raised ; or, in other words, that some shall have no future existence. This is the utmost which this argument can prove, even if it were well-founded and conclusive. But this conclusion cannot be admitted ; because it is the plain and undoubted doctrine of the gospel, that *all* shall be raised or made partakers of a future life ; that the resurrection is not confined to them who are comparatively just or righteous, but extends also to the wicked and unjust. Thus Paul in express terms declares his hope "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts xxiv. 15.

having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren : and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her ; and in like manner the seven also : and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she ? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage :

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage :

36 Neither can they die any

And such is the general doctrine of the New Testament. The translation of the phrase by Campbell more clearly expresses the idea intended to be conveyed by our Lord. Men are truly honored, by being made immortal and caused to resemble their heavenly Father. It is an honor, not due to them for their works, not to be regarded as a reward of their previous services, but freely bestowed as a mark of divine favor. This honor, not due to any as a reward, can as easily be bestowed on all as on a part of mankind, by the Father of all. His character, as the friend and benefactor of all, justifies the belief that he will have no respect of persons in the bestowment of this free and rich gift ; and he has distinctly assured us in the gospel, that all shall be made partakers of a future life.

36. *Children of God*. That is, they resemble God in character. All are his children now, by creation ; but, in the future life, they shall bear his moral image more distinctly. See notes on Matt. v. 43—48. Sonship is attain-

more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of

ed, in this life, in the same proportion that the heart becomes pure and holy, and the character assimilated to the divine character. The resemblance shall be more perfect, when the spirit is freed from its bondage to corruption. Rom. viii. 21. The apostle defines this kind of sonship thus: "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 14. And when men are brought completely under the influence of the divine spirit, when they bear the moral image of the heavenly man, then shall they be truly and in the highest sense the children of God. Such, our Lord assures us, shall be the character and condition of the children of the resurrection. And, as all are to be raised, or made partakers of the future life, it follows, that such shall be the final condition of all. See note on Matt. xxii. 30.

On the subject of the resurrection, as here taught by him who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10, it may be further observed, (1.) That the objection alleged by the Sadducees had respect to the *fact* of a resurrection to immortality, not to the number to be raised, whether few or many, ver. 27. It was not necessary, therefore, that Jesus should prove or even assert that the resurrection should be universal; it was sufficient, to prove from their own scriptures, whose authority they allowed, "that the dead are raised," ver. 37. This was what they denied; and this was all which he was called upon to prove. (2.) The argument, by which they attempted to substantiate their objection, was founded on the analogy which they supposed must exist between the present and the future life, provided there were any future life. In this matter, the Sadducees were misled by an opinion which has been productive of many mistakes since their day. Those who imagine that a close analogy exists between the character and condition of men now, and their character and condition in the future life, are in error, and manifest much ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God. For the scriptures represent the future condition of men to be exceedingly unlike the present, 1 Cor. xv. 42-49; and the same God, who subjected men to vani-

ty here, has abundant power to deliver them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of his children. Rom. viii. 20, 21. Thus, in reply to the Sadducees, Jesus assured them that no such analogy existed between this and the future life, and the condition of men in each, as they alleged; consequently their argument was without foundation or force. In the future life, the institution of marriage does not exist; of course no contention could arise between different claimants, as supposed in ver. 29-33. Thus was their argument answered effectually. (3.) Although the denial of the analogy was a sufficient answer to the argument founded upon it, Jesus superadds a reason for the denial; and shows that the necessity of the marriage relation does not continue in the future life, because men are then immortal. The objection of the Sadducees was not directed against the *duration* of the future life, but against the *future life* itself. There was no necessity to argue the question of immortality with them, for this was not the matter in dispute. Yet, on account of the peculiar nature of their argument, Jesus announced the fact that the future life should not end; thus showing the reasonableness of his declaration that in that life they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." (4.) For a similar reason, he proceeded further in describing the condition of men in the resurrection state, and declared that they "are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God." This was not the question in dispute; but, like the doctrine of immortality, was incidental to it. The simple question was, whether there be *any* future life; and this was sufficiently met, by the appeal to divine revelation, ver. 37, and the argument, ver. 38. But having mentioned the fact that the future life was endless, he took occasion to add, perhaps in confirmation of the doctrine of immortality, that men should be angelic in the future life, and the children of God in a peculiar sense. In so doing, he used terms which are never applied in the scriptures to wicked men in contradistinction to others, but which are often used to denote the more virtuous and holy class; and, as used here, they evidently denote altogether more perfect



37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 ¶ Then certain of the scribes, answering, said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that, they durst not ask him any *question at all*.

41 And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 'Till I make thine enemies thy

virtue and holiness, than when applied to men on earth. Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that the language here used indicates the holiness, the state of salvation, of the persons mentioned. (5.) From the foregoing facts, it may be fairly concluded, that our Lord here teaches the final purity and holiness of all men, not indeed as the principal topic of discourse, but incidentally, as naturally connected with that topic. The argument, if such it may be called, that Jesus could not have referred to the final moral condition of mankind, because this was not the main subject of dispute, is of no force; because, in this very place, it is universally agreed that he taught the doctrine of immortality, when *that* was not the subject of dispute. If he might properly speak of the *duration*, he might with equal propriety speak also of the *condition*, of that future life which the Sadducees denied in general terms. And though he does not assert, in so many words, that his description applies to all men, it is undeniable that it does apply to all whom he mentions as attaining the resurrection state, or a future life; and that such life shall be bestowed on all men, is abundantly proved by the scriptures and undoubtably believed by all Christians.

39. *Thou hast well said.* Matthew

footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

45 Then, in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

## CHAPTER XXI.

AND he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

and Mark relate an additional conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees, concerning the "great commandment in the law." Matt. xxii. 34-40; Mark xii. 23-34. Thus, in succession, he was assaulted by the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, each endeavoring to entangle him in conversation, and each being most signally discomfited. At the close of all, the scribes were compelled to acknowledge that he had *well said*; that is, that he had answered the various questions discreetly, wisely, truly. They were satisfied with his answer to the Herodians, pleased and gratified at his confutation of the Sadducees, and could not deny the truth and pertinency of his reply to their own question. Thus did truth triumph over falsehood, and honesty over hypocrisy.

40-44. See notes on Matt. xxii. 41-46. Parallel also with Mark xii. 35-37.

45-47. See notes on Matt. xxiii. 1-14. Parallel also with Mark xii. 33-40. Luke is not so full in his narrative of these admonitions to the Pharisees, and this searching exposition of their hypocrisy, as Matthew. Some portions, however, here omitted, are elsewhere recorded by this evangelist.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1-4. See notes on Mark xii. 41-44.

2 And he saw also a certain poor widow, casting in thither two mites.

3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God : but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

5 ¶ And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts, he said,

6 *As for* these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?

5—36. See notes on Matt. xxiv. 1—44. See also Mark, ch. xiii. In general terms, it may be remarked, that this passage is descriptive of the desolation and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, somewhat less than forty years after the prediction was uttered.

5. *Goodly stones.* Beautiful stones. Some have suggested that the reference may be to the precious stones wherewith the temple was adorned. But, from the remark in ver. 6, it seems more probable that the immense blocks of stone of which a portion of the wall was composed are denoted; many of which, we are told, were forty-five feet in length, twenty-two feet in width, and fourteen feet in thickness; and some, indeed, even much larger. They might well be called goodly or beautiful stones, when hewn and finished. From Matthew's account, the disciples seem to have expressed surprise that an edifice so substantially built could be destroyed, or a doubt whether God would permit the destruction of such a beautiful temple, consecrated to his service. Yet it became a heap of ruins. ¶ *Gifts.* "Things not only given to it, but hung up in it. Such was the golden vine, which Herod gave to the temple, and which is mentioned in Josephus, Antiq.

8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived : for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near : go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars, and commotions, be not terrified : for these things must first come to pass ; but the end is not by and by.

10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom :

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences : and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12 But before all these they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for

B. xv., ch. xi., § 3. Philo also tells us, that M. Agrippa gave gifts to the temple, and that the Emperor Augustus and almost all his family did the same."—Pearce.

8. *The time draweth near.* Nearly forty years were yet to elapse, before it should fully come. Some of the events which should previously occur are mentioned in the subsequent verses. After these things were fulfilled, then should Jerusalem be desolated and trodden down by the Gentiles; ver. 20, 24. Compared with the duration of human life, the intervening period was long; but compared with the whole course of time, it was short, and the event was near at hand.

9. *By and by.* This phrase is now seldom used, except in familiar conversation. It denotes a short period of time. The original word, *euthiōs*, (*εὐθιως*), occurs frequently, and is almost uniformly translated *immediately*; and such is its meaning here. The idea is, that the *end* should not be immediately subsequent to the events already mentioned, but that it should be delayed for a time, during which other events should occur, which are specified in the following verses.

12. *Lay hands on you.* **Forcibly**

my name's sake.

13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer.

15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adver-

seize you. Concerning these persecutions, see notes on Matt. x. 17—23; xxiv. 9, 10; Mark xiii. 9—13.

14, 15. *Settle it therefore in your hearts, &c.* Firmly resolve; deliberately conclude to trust unfalteringly in the providence of God. Do not rely on your own skill and shrewdness for a defence against your adversaries; study not any labored arguments in justification of your own conduct; I will give you wisdom and utterance in the hour of trial. In that wisdom you shall triumph; for your "adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist" the testimony which you shall utter in my name. It may be well to remember that this is a special, not a general, admonition; that it was addressed, not to all Christians under all circumstances, but to the primitive disciples under very peculiar circumstances. Ignorant and unlearned as they were, the unassisted energy of their own minds would have been insufficient to secure a triumph over their more skilful adversaries. The doctrines which they were to proclaim were such as the most acute minds of men had not been able fully to perceive and comprehend; and special assistance was necessary, to enable them so to announce, and explain, and enforce, and prove the truth of those doctrines, that others might understand and believe. Even Jesus himself relied, in great part, on miraculous power, for confirmation of the lessons of divine wisdom which he uttered. Much more was such power necessary to the disciples; and this power was manifested, not only in the *works* which they performed, but in the *words* which they uttered, as was substantially acknowledged by the Jewish council, Acts iv. 13. Moreover, it should not be forgotten, that one of the most overpowering arguments in their own justification, and to the confusion of their adversaries, was at this time beyond the comprehension of the disciples; the argument, namely, arising from the res-

urrection of Jesus. This, when used, was overwhelming in its effects. But as yet, the disciples were unable to understand its force, having no distinct idea of the fact itself. Jesus had repeatedly predicted his own death and resurrection; but they did not comprehend his meaning. They did not believe he would literally die; and when the event occurred, they utterly despaired of success. Neither, as a matter of course, did they believe in a literal resurrection; and, when this event was announced to them, by those who had seen the Lord, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke xxiv. 11. Suppose, then, Jesus had assured his disciples, that, when the days of persecution and trial should come, they should be able to confound their adversaries, by testifying his resurrection. Such an assurance could have had very little weight on their minds; it could not have inspired that fortitude, and firm reliance, and steadfast hope of security, which was evidently the intention of our Lord; for, on this subject, they understood not the meaning of what was uttered, and it was "hid from them." Luke ix. 45; xviii. 34. See note at the end of Matt. xxviii.

16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ye shall be hated of all

ururrection of Jesus. Hence it is sufficiently evident that our Lord's assurance of extraordinary aid was given especially, if not indeed exclusively, to the primitive disciples; and that it does not extend to Christians generally in all ages and under all circumstances. ¶ *Mouth.* Utterance; language; eloquence. By a figure, the mouth is put for the words which issue from it. ¶ *Gainsay nor resist.* Literally, speak against or stand against. They should be enabled to silence and confound, if they did not convert, their adversaries.

16. *Kinsfolks.* Relatives; a word now seldom used; *kinsmen*, however, having the same sense, continues in use.

18. *There shall not a hair of your head perish.* This declaration may seem

*men* for my name's sake.

18 But there shall not a hair of your head perish.

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains : and let them which are in the midst of

to be inconsistent with what is said in ver. 16. "Some of you shall they cause to be put to death." But it should be remembered that the phrase is proverbial, expressing a general truth, but not to be interpreted with literal exactness. The meaning is probably expressed thus : "Though some of you may be before that time put to death, (ver. 16 ; Acts vii. 60, and xii. 2,) yet in general such of you as are good Christians, and *endure unto the end*, shall be preserved from being destroyed with the Jewish state. This proverbial expression is used in Acts xxvii. 34. See also Luke xii. 7, and Matt. x. 30."—*Pearce*. See notes on Matt. x. 22 ; xvi. 25.

19. *In your patience, &c.* By many, this word is here understood to mean *perseverance*. ¶ *Possess ye your souls.* "Some read here the *future* instead of the *present* of the verb rendered *possess*. The word *possess* means here to *preserve* or keep, and the word *souls* means *lives*. This passage may be thus translated : By persevering in bearing these trials, you will save your lives, or you will be safe ; or, by persevering, *preserve* your lives ; that is, do not yield to these calamities, but bear up under them, for he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Compare Matt. xxiv. 13."—*Barnes*. If this be the true exposition, then the passage refers to the safety and security granted to the faithful disciples, at the calamitous period when Jerusalem was destroyed ; and it is a remarkable fact, that, of more than a million of persons who then perished, it is not known that there was a single Christian. The disciples, observant of their Master's instructions, retired to Pella, a place of security, before the final catastrophe. See Matt. xvi. 25. But perhaps the exhortation may mean

it depart out ; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the

simply, *Be patient*. Jesus had predicted trials which his disciples must encounter, ver. 12 ; he had also assured them that they should receive divine and effectual aid and protection, ver. 14—18. In hope of such aid, and with confident reliance on his promise of such protection, it would be their duty to be patient in the anticipation of such trials, as well as in their endurance.

20. *Jerusalem compassed with armies.* This is styled by Matthew and Mark "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet." Matt. xxiv. 15 ; Mark xiii. 14. When this event occurred, which preceded the final overthrow of the city, the disciples fled to the "mountains," ver. 21, and other places of security. Concerning the singular conduct of the Roman general at this time, and the opportunity thus afforded for escape, see note on Mark xiii. 20 ; see also notes on Matt. xxiv. 15—21.

22. *Days of vengeance, &c.* This was the period to which the ancient prophecies referred, when a manifest distinction should be made between the evil and the good, and the retribution should be so signal and general as to justify the highly figurative language which is employed in describing the approach of the Judge and the gathering of the people to be judged, ver. 25—27, and Matt. xxiv. 29—39. For similar descriptions of the same coming and judgment, see Matt. xvi. 27, 28 ; xxv. 31—46. The character of the vengeance here indicated, or the calamities which befell that obdurate and unbelieving race who had filled their cup of iniquity to the brim, is described somewhat in detail in ver. 23, 24. Such was the fate of that unhappy generation, ver. 32.

24. *Shall fall by the edge of the*

edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin

*sword.* Josephus says that, during the siege and at the capture of Jerusalem, one million and one hundred thousand persons perished. ¶ *Led away captive.* The same author asserts that ninety thousand were carried away captives into foreign lands. ¶ *Trodden down, &c.* Under subjection. Being under the feet of others implies subjection to authority, and perhaps includes the idea of oppression and abuse on the part of rulers, as well as abject degradation on the part of the enslaved. The figure is taken from a practice which prevailed in former times ; then conquerors literally placed their feet upon the necks of those whom they had subdued, especially the most powerful, such as princes or commanders ; see Josh. x. 24. ¶ *Times of the Gentiles, &c.* This phrase has been very differently interpreted by various commentators. "That is, till those Gentiles have done all which God has decreed that they shall do."—*Pearce.* "It seems most natural to suppose the time of the Gentiles here signifies the time when they shall be visited and punished."—*Doddridge.* "Till the end of the world, when there shall no longer be any Gentiles."—*Rosenmüller.* "Until the Christian religion should prevail among the Gentiles," referring particularly to the time of Constantine, who "prohibited persecutions and gave liberty to the church. This was the period, when the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, and the

to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads : for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable ; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees ;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away.

reign of Christianity commenced."—*Calmet.* "Till the glorious conversion of the Gentiles at the coming in of the Jews, who shall then also be gathered to their own city and country."—*Whitby.* These may serve as a specimen of the diverse expositions. Whithy seems to have approached most nearly to the truth ; and with him agree, substantially, Hammond and the authors of the Assembly's Annotations. The apostle may be understood as referring to the same general subject, Rom. xi. 25—32. It is evident the full period has not yet expired ; for Jerusalem continues to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. How much longer the devoted nation of the Jews shall remain a monument of God's retributive justice in the earth, He knows, and He only.

25, 26. In these verses is a vivid description, in highly figurative language of the commotions and distress, which should so prevail over the whole land of Judea, that the hearts of men should be utterly enervated by fear, and their minds bewildered by perplexity.

23. *Your redemption draweth nigh.* That is, your deliverance from the trials and persecutions, predicted ver. 12, 16, 17, shall quickly succeed these events. The apostle refers to the same deliverance, Rom. xiii. 11. "This is expressed in ver. 31, thus : The kingdom of God is nigh at hand. That is, from that time God will signally build up his kingdom. It shall be fully es-

34 ¶ And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

37 And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in

the mount that is called *the mount of Olives*.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**N**OW the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him: for they feared the people.

3 ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

tablished when the Jewish policy shall come to an end, when the temple shall be destroyed, and the Jews scattered abroad. 'Then the power of the Jews shall be at an end; they shall no longer be able to persecute you; and you shall be completely delivered from all these trials and calamities in Judea.'

—*Barnes*.

34. The duty of watchfulness and constant preparation for the coming of the Lord, to execute judgment on that generation, is here inculcated. See note on Matt. xxiv. 45—51.

35. As a snare, &c. Watchfulness was the more necessary, because the destruction would come suddenly and unexpectedly. Unless they were careful to observe the appointed signs and make a seasonable escape, they would be involved with the guilty, and destroyed. The suddenness of the calamity, and the necessity of the utmost vigilance and promptitude of action, are described, in lively figures, Matt. xxiv. 37—41. As birds are taken in a snare, when unconscious of danger, so would the Jewish people be destroyed with their city, in the midst of their vain dreams of security. The same idea is elsewhere expressed by the figure of a thief making unexpected depredation in the night. Matt. xxiv. 43; Luke xii. 39; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10. The only point of resemblance indicated, however, is that the calamity was unexpected to those who fancied themselves secure.

37, 38 See notes on Matt. xxi. 1, 17.

It would seem that during the few remaining days of his mortal life, our Lord taught in Jerusalem by day, and retired at night to Bethany, upon the slope of the mount of Olives, where dwelt Lazarus and his sisters.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1, 2. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 1—5. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 1, 2.

3—14. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 14—20. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 10—17.

3. *Entered Satan into Judas*. See note on Matt. iv. 1. The same Satan here tempted Judas, which tempts every man "when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." James i. 14. The besetting lust of Judas was *avarice*, or the love of money, which "is the root of all evil," and which has led thousands "into temptation and a snare," caused them to "err from the faith," and involved them in "many sorrows," even in "destruction and perdition." 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. It appears from the other evangelists, that Jesus had just administered a severe rebuke to Judas for his insatiable thirst of gold. Compare Matt. xxvi. 6—14, and Mark xiv. 3—10, with John xii. 1—8. This excited his indignation; and partly under the influence of this feeling, and partly with the hope of obtaining gold from the chief priests and elders, he resolved to betray his Master into their hands. There was no need of a supernatural tempter. His conduct was precisely such as might be expected from

4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you,

a person of his character. He acted under the impulse of the moment, as Peter did shortly afterwards, when he profanely denied all knowledge of his Master; and, like him too, he afterwards most bitterly repented. See the case of Judas examined, somewhat at length, in the note on Matt. xxvi. 24.

14. *When the hour was come, &c.* That is, for the celebration of the Passover. This great feast of the Jews, which indeed was typical of himself and of his death, Jesus celebrated on the evening before his crucifixion. See Matt. xxvi. 20; Mark xiv. 17. On this solemn occasion, faithful to the last in his kindness to the unthankful and the evil, he permitted Judas to sit down with himself and the eleven faithful disciples, and to unite in this act of religious worship. Compare ver. 21—23, with Matt. xxvi. 21—25.

15. *With desire I have desired, &c.* That is, I have strongly, vehemently desired to eat this passover with you, and in this place, before I suffer death at the hands of the Jews. Many considerations may have prompted this desire. He knew that his hour was at hand, when by wicked hands he should be crucified and slain, Acts ii. 23; when he, the Bishop and Shepherd of souls should be smitten, and his sheep scattered. Matt. xxvi. 31; 1 Pet. ii. 25. He knew that this event was not expected by his disciples; for although

bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And they went and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.

he had often forewarned them of it, in plain and explicit terms, "they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken." Luke xviii. 34. He desired once more to converse with them upon this subject, so that, if they should not now fully understand him, they might at least be inspired with a more firm and unwavering trust in him, and thus be fortified against the temptations which would soon assail them. It is generally supposed that the discourse and prayer, recorded by John, ch. xiii. to xvii., were uttered on this occasion. Moreover, he knew the weakness and infirmity of men; how prone they are to become negligent of blessings, and forgetful of their benefactors. He desired therefore, to institute a memorial, that he might be remembered by his disciples, and that his labors on their behalf might not be forgotten; and this, not so much on his account, as on their own; they needed the benefit of this memorial, and for their advantage it was designed. Such, we may reasonably suppose, were two of the reasons which induced him thus ardently to desire to eat this passover with his disciples. To accomplish the first object, namely, to strengthen the hearts of the disciples, and give them more steadfast confidence, he uttered the affecting, and consoling, and encouraging discourse

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves.

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

recorded by John, ch. xiii., xiv., xv., and xvi. And he commended them also to God, in fervent prayer. John, ch. xvii. For the accomplishment of the other object named, that is, to guard against the forgetfulness of his disciples, he instituted the supper, which from its origin is called the Lord's Supper, engrafting it upon the Jewish Passover. And there was a peculiar propriety in this; for the passover and the supper have reference to the same individual and the same event; the one pointing forward and the other backward to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

16. *I will not any more eat thereof, until, &c.* One idea distinctly conveyed by this language is, that this was the last time that Jesus would partake of the passover, before his death. And it seems not unreasonable to suppose that he here refers to the typical nature of the passover, and intimates that the event which it prefigured was now about to be fulfilled in his own death and the consequent establishment of the kingdom of God.

17. *He took the cup, &c.* This is not regarded as the true sacramental cup; but as one of the cups usually taken in the celebration of the passover. It was only the last or concluding cup, the cup of blessing, which he selected for his purpose, ver. 20. See note on Matt. xxvi. 27. ¶ *Divide it among yourselves.* From this expression, and from the declaration in ver. 18, it appears that Jesus did not drink of the wine. He ate the passover; for though he declared that he would not do so any more, or again, ver. 16, yet it is evident from ver. 15, that he did eat on this occasion. But in regard to the wine, he tells his disciples to divide it among themselves, and assigns as the reason, that he will not drink of it, "until the kingdom of God shall come,"

19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

an event then represented as future, not present.

18. See note on Matt. xxvi. 29.

19, 20. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 26—29, where the terms here used are sufficiently explained. Compare Mark xiv. 22—29, and 1 Cor. xi. 23—25, where the same subject is narrated. Some have denied that the Lord's Supper was designed to be perpetually observed by his church. I do not propose a long argument on this question; but a few remarks may not be improper. I am not aware that our Lord or his apostles required Christians, in so many words, to observe this ordinance, until the end of time. On the other hand, I can conceive of no possible reason why they should neglect to do it, as a privilege, if not as a commanded duty; or why it is not as profitable and necessary to Christians now, as it was to the apostles and primitive disciples. It cannot be said, that it was designed only for those who were specially commanded; for there is no evidence that any were thus commanded except "the twelve apostles," ver. 14; yet it is certain, that, wherever they formed churches, they encouraged the observance of the Lord's Supper; thus showing that they did not consider it to have been instituted for their peculiar benefit. There is no evidence, moreover, that the apostles affixed any limit to its perpetuity; but they appear to have left its duration as unlimited as its extent; in other words, to have regarded it as proper and profitable for disciples in *all ages* of the church, as for *all disciples* in the apostolic age. I am aware that Paul has been understood to intimate, 1 Cor. xi. 26, that it was to be observed only until the Lord should come, or until Jerusalem should be overthrown and the kingdom of God established. Yet it is certain that Christians continued to observe it, after that event occurred. If it be said that Paul deceased before *that*



21 ¶ But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22 And truly the Son of man

period, and could not therefore correct the mistake of his brethren, it must not be forgotten that John survived, who was present at the original institution of the supper, and, being a favorite disciple, had an opportunity to know as well as any other its original design. Yet there is no evidence that he supposed his brethren were doing wrong, or even performing a work of supererogation, by continuing to "show forth the Lord's death" by partaking of the emblems of his body and blood. The brethren continued to do so, without the least hint of disapprobation from the beloved apostle; and from that day to this, the ordinance has remained a standing monument of the truth of Christianity, directing the eyes of men in all ages to its blessed Founder, and refreshing and comforting the hearts of his sincere disciples. So much for authority. As to its expediency and benefit, can any reason be assigned why it should have ceased heretofore, or why it should cease now? Is it less profitable to us, than to those of old time? Were they in danger of forgetting their obligations of gratitude to their Master? The danger is increased by distance of time. If they could possibly forget him whom they had seen, how much more are we in danger of forgetting him whom we have not seen, and how much more necessity have we for a memorial to stir up our minds by way of remembrance. Was it possible for their love to become cold? Our danger is much greater, for the reason before mentioned. Did they need this memorial to quicken them to the faithful performance of duty? We need it more; for they had the special guidance and assistance of the Holy Ghost, of which we are destitute. Did they need it, to sustain them in trials, to preserve them in temptation, to comfort them in affliction? We more; for they had seen the Lord while living, had heard his instructions, had seen him after his resurrection, had been assured that the spirit of truth should both guide and comfort them, John xiv. 16, 17, 26, and had actually received the Holy Ghost; in all which respects, we need *other as-*

goeth as it was determined: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to inquire

sistance, guidance, and comfort, more than they did. Was it proper for the early disciples to commemorate the dying love of their Master, and thus manifest their gratitude publicly? I see not why it is any less proper for us to do likewise. If Jesus, in the abundance of his love for us, encountered toil and hardship, ignominy and disgrace, persecution and death itself, that he might benefit us, and give us hope of immortal blessedness through the grace of God, it is truly a light thing for us to devote a few hours, at stated seasons, in commemorating that love as his professed disciples, even though the thoughtless and unbelieving may mock and accuse us of folly. And, as a means of cultivating a spirit of devotion; of forming and strengthening good resolutions; of eradicating from the heart impure and unholy passions; of fanning the flame of love to God and man; of attaining consolation in affliction and distress, by the conviction, that he who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," will freely give us all things we need, Rom. viii. 32, and that as "Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," 1 Thess. iv. 14; in all these respects, I cannot conceive a more profitable exercise, than communion at the Lord's table. And those who abstain from it appear to cut themselves off from one of the richest fountains of grace, edification, and consolation, which can be found in our pilgrimage through life. Instead of standing aloof from the table, either in scorn or indifference, or approaching it unwillingly, merely as a duty which we would rather avoid than perform, much more happy shall we be to account it a rich privilege thus to commemorate our Lord's love and to increase the fervency of our own. If we regard this ordinance aright, we shall not too curiously inquire into the precise degree in which we are *bound* to its observance, but shall rather regard it as a *privilege*, for which we shall fervently thank God, while we enjoy the benefits which it imparts.

21—23. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 21

among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24 ¶ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye *shall* not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

—25. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 18—21.

24—27. Matthew and Mark place this dispute among the disciples, before their entry into Jerusalem. Matt. xx. 20—23; Mark x. 35—45; and they relate at large the peculiar form of dispute which Luke only announces in general terms; but the closing admonition of our Lord is so identical in the several passages, that there can be little doubt that all refer to the same event. See, especially, Matt. xx. 25—28, where the terms used by our Lord are explained. This contention for precedence and dignity was a peculiarly painful exhibition of human frailty; and it must have been a sore trial to their Master, who had just been speaking of his own death. So little did they understand the true character of the Messiah and his kingdom, so completely were their minds under the dominion of Jewish prejudices, that they neither believed he would die, nor, after he died, expected his resurrection. A temporal kingdom was the great object of their hope, at this time, and temporal dignity and glory the great object of their ambition. See note at the end of Matt. xxviii. Some, however, suppose the several evangelists relate two instances of contention, similar in their character and results. If this be the fact, it shows yet more strongly the inveteracy of the prejudice, which blinded the disciples, that they should so soon need a second admonition of this kind.

25. *Called benefactors.* Matthew says simply “are great.” Matt. xx. 25. “That there is an allusion to the titles much affected by monarchs and conquerors in those ages, amongst

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations;

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

which, *benefactor*, *energetēs*, was one, there can be little doubt.”—*Campbell*. It is said that the title *benefactor* was often applied to rulers, as a compliment, or perhaps as a matter of courtesy. Very possibly, the address of Paul to Felix partook somewhat of this character. Acts xxiv. 2.

28. *My temptations.* Rather, my trials, which indeed were temptations, inasmuch as they sometimes induced our Lord to shrink from the dreadful consummation of his earthly ministry, and to consider anxiously whether he might not in some way avoid it. See notes on ver. 40—46, and Matt. iv. 1—11.

29, 30. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, &c.* See note on Matt. xix. 28. “Christ speaks not here of the heavenly kingdom, common to all the faithful, but of a kingdom proper to his *apostles*, namely, that as his Father had given him power to make laws by which all his subjects should be governed, and to which they should be subject, so did he give to his apostles power to deliver to Christians those evangelical laws which they should all be obliged to obey; now hence it follows, that the gospels and epistles of the apostles must be owned as the laws of Christ. And whereas the nobility in a kingdom use to be known by two things, the honor and the power imparted to them, their honor in eating at the king’s table, their power in having a share in the government under the king; therefore our Saviour represents the honor of his apostles by eating and drinking with him at his table, and their power by judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”—

*Whitby*

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat :

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and when

31, 32. In these verses is described, in figurative language, the overpowering temptation which soon afterwards beset Peter. ¶ *Satan*. See notes on Matt. iv. 1 ; Luke xiii. 16. ¶ *Sift you as wheat*. An allusion to the mode of winnowing grain ; it was agitated in a fan or sieve, that the chaff might be blown away while the solid grain remained. Thus temptation serves to reveal the true character of men, to distinguish the chaff from the wheat, or apparent from real and living virtuous principle. It has been supposed, with much probability, that this address to Peter has an intimate relation to the unjustifiable and disgraceful contention which had just occurred among the disciples, which "was chiefly moved betwixt himself and the two sons of Zebedee. For it seems unlikely, that the other nine would have contended for the primacy with Peter, James, and John, whom Christ had so peculiarly distinguished, in their presence, with marks of his favor. So that the struggle seems to be especially between these three, and Peter the beginner of the strife ; which appears, partly, in that our Saviour rebukes him by name ; and partly, in that he could not forget, without some grudge, that request of the two brothers, 'Lord, let us sit, one on thy right hand, the other on thy left.'

—There seems an emphasis in the word, *pistis*, (πίστις,) *faith*, ver. 32. As to the other apostles, indeed, that Christian courage and magnanimity, which they ought to have exerted in that difficult time, did fail them ; but their faith was nothing so near shipwreck as Peter's faith was. They indeed deserted their Master and fled, Mark xiv. 50 ; which they seem to have not done without some connivance from himself, John xviii. 8. But when Peter renounced and abjured his Lord, how near was he becoming an 'apostate,' and his faith from suffering a total shipwreck ? Certainly it was Peter's advantage, that Christ prayed for him ; but it was not so much for his honor, that he, beyond all others, should stand in need of such

thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Pe-

a prayer."—*Lightfoot*. ¶ *When thou art converted, &c.* Or, reclaimed from the folly and guilt, into which temptation will lead you. See remarks on the fall and recovery of Peter, here referred to, in notes on Matt. xxvi. 69—75 ; Mark xiv. 66—72. Up to this time, indeed, neither Peter nor the other apostles can be said to have been fully converted to Christianity, using the word *conversion* in its common sense ; for while they believed on Jesus, and supposed him to be the Messiah, they utterly mistook his true character, and consequently their faith was not what is now termed Christian faith ; moreover, they did not yet believe in their Master's resurrection from the dead, and withstood the evidence of that fact when made known to them. Luke xxiv. 11. See note on Matt. xix. 23.

33. *I am ready to go, &c.* Doubtless Peter made this profession, in all honesty and sincerity. Of ardent temperament and enthusiastic feelings, he believed himself capable of sustaining any trial, resisting any temptation, ver. 31. If this be understood as connected with the contention for superiority, ver. 24, then the profession of Peter would seem to have been made in justification of his claim to be accounted the first or greatest : as if he had said, I ought to be greatest in dignity, because I am willing to labor more abundantly than any other, and to make greater sacrifices, for thee ; I am willing even to endure imprisonment and death with thee. How little did he know his own frailty ! Only a few hours elapsed before this self-confident disciple, who thought himself able to face death without flinching, and who actually did draw his sword and smite the adversary, became so unmanned by terror, that he trembled at the question of a girl, and denied all knowledge of his Master, even with profane curses ; ver. 56—60 ; Mark xiv. 66—72.

34. See note on Matt. xxvi. 34. Peter was thus assured, that his strength was not equal to his estimation of it, and that he was not yet sufficiently estab-

ter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 ¶ And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any

lished in the faith to become the lord of his brethren ; instead of this, he was about to manifest his inferiority in calm and steady courage, by more vehemently denying his Master. Matthew adds, that Peter, with his usual passionate earnestness, protested against this imputation upon his steadfastness and courage, exclaiming, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And that they might not be out-done by him in his profession of zeal, and to show that their own claim to honor was equal to his, "likewise also said all the disciples." Matt. xxvi. 35. Or, to take the most favorable view of the case ; suppose the profession of Peter and the other disciples to have been entirely disinterested, expressive only of their devotion to Jesus and their willingness to suffer with him, a lesson is afforded of weakness and frailty, which should be seriously considered by all over-confident Christians.

35. *When I sent you, &c.* See notes on Matt. x. 9, 10. Jesus here appeals to the truth of his former predictions, to confirm the faith of his disciples in him, and to induce them to trust always in the divine protection, throughout their whole life, as well as in the special trial near at hand.

36. *But now, &c.* Much difficulty has attended the interpretation of this verse ; especially what is said concerning the purchase of a sword ; for it is allowed on all hands, that Jesus did not intend to offer resistance when he should be apprehended, that he checked the forward zeal of Peter, who resorted to violence, and that it is contrary to the genius of Christianity to employ brute force in securing its triumph throughout the world. Pearce suggests that the word rendered *sword* is an interpolation ; but he offers no good authority for the suggestion, nor am I aware that any such can be found. He seems nearer the truth when he suggests, as an alternative, that "this saying must have been a proverbial one, meaning, now look to yourselves, when danger is at hand," referring to the speedy ap-

thing ? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise *his* scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

proach of those who were coming to apprehend him. Much to the same purpose is the remark of Lightfoot : "He warns them of a danger that is very near ; and, in a common way of speech, lets them know that they had more need of providing swords for their defence against a common enemy, than be any way quarrelling among themselves. Not so much exhorting them to repel force with force, as to give them such an apprehension of the common rage of their enemies against them, that might suppress all private animosities amongst themselves." That there was intended such an allusion to the folly of contention for the chief places of honor and dignity, and the necessity of union for preservation against a common danger, seems sufficiently reasonable. But I think the admonition refers not so much to the danger then at hand, as to the long-continued and constant struggle with the adversary which they were required to wage, during the remainder of life. Hitherto, their labors had been in Judea. Matt. x. 5, 6. But now, they were to visit foreign and barbarous realms ; they were to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15 ; and their danger would be increased. The admonition should be regarded as general, not specific ; the disciples were cautioned to be on their guard against every species of danger. Excepting the single blow struck by the impetuous Peter, no violence was ever offered by any of the apostles or primitive disciples, against their adversaries, from that day forward. It is true, they mistook his meaning at first ; for they inquired whether they should "smite with the sword." ver. 49, and Peter did smite, ver. 50. But Jesus intimated his disapproval distinctly, Matt. xxvi. 52, and subsequently declared that it was improper for his disciples to resort to violence, or to fight with the sword, because his kingdom was not of this world. John xviii. 36. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus did not intend to be understood as literally requiring the use of the sword, in this

37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said

place; but rather designed a general caution to guard against danger.

37. *This that is written.* The passage here referred to is Isa. liii. 12. Jesus was reckoned *among transgressors*, and even as a transgressor, by men; for he was condemned by the Jews as a blasphemer, by the Romans as a traitor against Cæsar, and was crucified between two thieves. But not so was he reckoned by the Father. In *his* sight, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. vii. 26. ¶ *Have an end.* That is, the prediction is about to be accomplished. This is a manifest allusion to his speedy apprehension and death. In connexion with the preceding verse, the meaning may be understood thus: I am soon to be ignominiously destroyed by the Jews, according to the ancient prediction; you will be left to carry forward my work, without my personal assistance; as you will be beset on all hands by persecution and danger, it will become your duty to use all proper means to defend yourselves, and to make provision for the security of your lives, so far as may be consistent with a faithful performance of duty.

33. *Here are two swords, &c.* "The remark here made by the disciples, and our Lord's answer, show manifestly two things: the first is, that his meaning was not perfectly comprehended by them; the second, that he did not think it necessary at that time, to open the matter further to them. Their remark evinces that they understood him literally. — By his answer, *It is enough*, though he declined attempting to undeceive them by entering further into the subject, he signified, with sufficient plainness, to those who should reflect on what he said, that arms were not the resource they ought to think of. For what were two swords against all the ruling powers of the nation? The import of the proverbial expression here used by our Lord is, therefore, this,

unto them, *It is enough.*

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

"We need no more," which does not imply that they really needed, or would use, those they had."—*Campbell.* If it be inquired how the disciples chanced to find *two swords* in readiness, it may be answered, that it was the common custom of the country, especially in Galilee, to go armed, because travellers were liable to be assaulted by robbers. Yet it is worthy of remark, as showing the peaceful character and conduct of Jesus, that only two of his twelve apostles were thus armed, notwithstanding the prevalent custom. One of these two swords is found, where we should most confidently look for it, in the hands of Peter, ver. 50; John xviii. 10.

39—46. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 30, 36—46. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 26, 32—42.

39. *His disciples also followed him.* Judas had departed, in order to accomplish his perfidy; the eleven faithful disciples accompanied their Master to the garden. But after their arrival, he selected three to retire with him to a more secluded spot; and even from these he departed a short distance in his hour of agony. Matt. xxvi. 37—39; Mark xiv. 33—35.

40. *Into temptation.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 41. From the repeated exhortation, here and in ver. 46, that his disciples should pray, that they might not enter into temptation, as well as from other circumstances attending the intervening narrative, it seems reasonable to regard this scene as the renewal of that temptation which our Lord encountered in the wilderness. See notes on Matt. iv. 1—11. It is manifest, from his whole history, that, while it was his meat and drink to do his Father's will, yet he had a continual and distressing dread of the pain and the excruciating death which he clearly foresaw as the termination of his labors on earth. At times, he anxiously considered whether he might not, in some way, avoid those sufferings, and yet

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

accomplish the mission entrusted to him. One such trial he had, in the wilderness, when various expedients passed in review before his mind ; and, for the moment, his dread of pain induced him to contemplate, with some degree of allowance, a departure from the strict line of duty. But these temptations were resisted and conquered. Now, in the garden, when the mockery and insult on the part of his adversaries, the desertion and denial of his chosen disciples, and deliberate treachery of one of the number, and the ignominy, acute pain, and death, which himself must endure,—when all this was perceived to be so very near, the innocent sufferer was overpowered for a time, and ardently besought his Father to allow a deviation from the course of events prescribed, ver. 42. Holding himself ready to submit, and to obey the will of God in all things, still he prayed that, if it were possible, he might be spared the agony he so much dreaded, Matt. xxvi. 39. It was the same sensitiveness, the same dread of pain, the same irrepressible shrinking from torture, which moved him in the wilderness and caused him to sweat as it were drops of blood in the garden. But even in this trial he triumphed, God helping him.

42. *Remove this cup from me.* Spare me this trial ; permit me to accomplish my labor in some other manner. *¶ Not my will, but thine, be done.* In his hour of utmost extremity, our blessed Lord was submissive to his Father. He doubted not the Father's goodness, nor the abundance of his grace ; and while he had the keenest sensibility to present and approaching trials, submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1 Pet. ii. 23. And among the blessings derived through him to mankind, may be properly reckoned this blessed example of faith in God, and submission to his holy will in all things. Nothing can more effectually sustain us, in the trials which sometimes op-

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

press and temporarily overpower us, than that faith in the faithfulness and loving kindness of God, which will fill our hearts with a spirit of true submission, and enable us to say, *not our will, but thine, be done.*

43. *An angel—strengthening him.* Such an appearance was connected with the temptation in the wilderness, Matt. iv. 11 ; though, in that case, the angels did not appear until the temptation was overcome. "But in the midst of this trial, there was an angel 'strengthening him;' and why so? By reason of his agony, you will say ; and that very truly : but whence arose this agony ? and of what kind was it ? It was occasioned, you will say, from a sense of divine indignation and wrath. This *dare not* I say, or imagine, that God was angry, or conceived any indignation against him at all. And if the anguish and agony of his mind was the result of the divine wrath pressing in upon him, I do not see what kind of comfort an angel could minister against the wrath of God. It is rather an argument, God was not angry with him, when he sent an angel to comfort him."—*Lightfoot.* Some have indulged the most extravagant fancies, concerning this scene in the Garden of Gethsemane ; supposing that the fierce wrath of God was poured out upon the defenceless head of his Son, who had never given offence, but always had been and at that moment was obedient in all things ! See the succeeding note.

44. *In an agony.* *Agony*, which is a Greek word transplanted into English with a slight variation of form, literally denotes a severe contest or painful struggle. In English, it uniformly embraces the idea of acute mental or physical pain ; and such is doubtless the import of the word in this place. It is universally admitted, and the context leaves no doubt, that our Lord endured the keenest distress, at this time. Concerning the cause of that distress, various opinions have been entertained.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake,

"He wrestled not only with the terrors of death,—but with the terrible justice of God pouring out his anger on sins, than which nothing more dreadful can be thought of; for he bare the burden of all our sins." &c.—*Assemb. Annot.* This idea has extensively prevailed, much to the dishonor of Christianity, of which it has been represented as a part. But some, who firmly believed in the "vicarious atonement" of Christ, have nevertheless protested against the supposition that Jesus at this time endured, in any proper sense, the wrath of God. See *Lightfoot*, quoted in the preceding note. "The cause of this agony seems not to have been well understood; and there have been many wild conjectures concerning it. Some think it was occasioned by 'the *divine wrath* pressing in upon him; for as he was bearing the sin of the world, God looked on and treated him as if he were a sinner.' There is something very shocking in this supposition; and yet it is truly astonishing, how general it is.—The ministry of the angel, who must have been sent from God, and sent in love too, is a full proof that God's wrath was not poured out on our blessed Redeemer at this time."—*Clarke*. Others have supposed that Jesus was assaulted by a personal devil. "That which the Jews feign or dream about Solomon, that he saw the angel of death (that is, the devil) gnashing his teeth, and that a disciple of Rabbi did so too, I suppose acted in good earnest here; namely, that Christ saw the devil, that old dragon, gaping at him, with all horror he could put on."—*Lightfoot*. Concerning the probability of a temptation by a personal devil, see note on Matt. iv. 1. My own opinion as to the principal cause of our Lord's agony is sufficiently indicated in the notes on ver. 40, 42, and Matt. iv. 1—11. Much to the same purpose is the following: "I cannot suppose that he was penetrated with a sense of God's indignation, nor that he was under the immediate power of

behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about

Satan, nor that he was oppressed and overcome by the sense that he was to bear the sins of mankind in his own body on the tree;—but that he was impressed with a lively view of the immediate indignities and insults, of the disgrace, and horrid pains of death, which awaited him, and that he was overwhelmed by sorrow and anguish, proportioned to his exquisite sensibility, the consciousness of his wrongs, and his extensive foresight."—*Newcome*. ¶ *His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, &c.* Some understand this to mean simply that the perspiration was so profuse as to form large globules or drops, like blood. Others understand, that the perspiration was actually bloody, his anguish being so intense as to force out particles of blood, mingled with the perspiration, through the pores of the skin. This, though unusual, is said to have been witnessed in other cases of extraordinary agony. "I see nothing why this might not be so great an agony as to force blood out of his capillary veins, to mix with it, this being no unusual thing; for Aristotle says, 'some have sweat a bloody sweat;'—and Diodorus Siculus saith of the Indian serpents, that 'if any one be bitten by them, he is tormented by excessive pains, and seized with a bloody sweat.'"—*Whitby*. Pearce also quotes, in connexion with the passage from Diodorus, similar testimonies from Dr. Mead and Thuanus. The philanthropist Howard, in his work on Lazarettoes, as quoted by Livermore, says, "on taking notice of the rings, pulleys, &c., for the torture, the jailer told me that he had seen drops of blood, mixed with the sweat, on the breasts of some who had suffered the torture." It may not, then, be unreasonable to understand that there was such mingling of blood with the perspiration which was forced out by the agony of our Lord.

45. *Sleeping for sorrow.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 40.

47—53 See notes on Matt. xxvi. 47

him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 ¶ And one of them smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

54 Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

—56. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 43—50; compare John xviii. 2—12, where the same events are narrated in a somewhat different order.

49. *Shall we smite with the sword?* See notes on ver 36, 33.

51. *Suffer ye thus far.* This phrase has been variously interpreted. Some have supposed the words were addressed to the Jews or soldiers who had probably seized Jesus; and that he designed them as a request that he might have liberty to go *so far* as to touch the mutilated servant and heal him. But Campbell satisfactorily shows that the original will not bear this construction. He translates the phrase thus: "Let this suffice;" and adds,—"All antiquity seems agreed in understanding our Lord's expression as a check to his disciple, by intimating that they were

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fel-low* also was with him; for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

63 ¶ And the men that held Jesus, mocked him, and smote him.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66 ¶ And as soon as it was day,

net to proceed further in the way of resistance; as it was not to such methods of defence that he chose to recur. What is recorded by the other evangelists, Matt. xxvi. 52, 53, John xviii. 11, as likewise said on the occasion, strongly confirms this explanation. — The words of our Lord, then, in the most simple and natural interpretation, denote, *Let pass what is done; enough of this; no more of this.* ¶ *And healed him.* That is, restored the mutilated member. Jesus returned good for evil, and performed a miracle for the benefit of an enemy; or, at least, one who was in the employment and company of his enemies.

54—62. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 57, 58, 69—75; Mark xiv. 53, 54, 66—72; John xviii. 13—27.

63—71. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 59



the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led him into their council,

67 Saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe.

68 And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

71 And they said. What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

—63. Parallel also with Mark xiv. 55  
—65. See John xviii. 19—23.

63. *If I also ask you, &c.* That is, if I exhibit before you the evidences of my Messiahship, or appeal to those which I have already manifested, and ask you whether they be sufficient to establish the fact, *ye will not answer me* honestly, nor confess the truth; neither will you liberate me. I will not give you a direct answer. But know this; you shall shortly see me in glory, coming to execute judgment on your nation; you will *then* have sufficient evidence concerning my character, ver. 69.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

1. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 1, 2. See also Mark xv. 1, and John xviii. 23.

2. *We found this fellow.* This contemptuous phrase doubtless expresses the feeling of the Jews, but is not an exact translation of the original, where no word is found answering to *fellow*.

*We found this man*, or more properly still, *we found him*, would express the full force of the original. See note on Matt. xii. 21, where a similar phrase occurs. ¶ *Perverting the nation, &c.* Leading the people astray, by exciting them to transfer their allegiance from Cæsar, the Roman emperor, to himself. This charge was utterly false, in every respect. In the only instances where he is recorded to have mentioned the sub-

### CHAPTER XXIII.

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, That he himself is Christ, a king.

3 And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it*.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people,

ject of tribute, or taxes, he recommended its payment to Cæsar, and paid it himself. Matt. xvii. 24—27; xxii. 16—22. And he had uniformly disclaimed the intention of establishing an earthly kingdom. But the priests and elders, having resolved his death, knew it was necessary to allege against him a political crime. They had succeeded in exasperating the people, by an allegation of blasphemy; but something more was necessary, in order to procure his condemnation by a heathen tribunal. Hence they preferred the charge of treason. See note on Matt. xxvii. 11. Some of the preliminary proceedings, omitted here, are recorded by John, xviii. 23—32.

3. See note on Matt. xxvii. 11. See also Mark xv. 2, and John xviii. 33—33.

4. *I find no fault, &c.* Jesus so satisfactorily explained the matter to Pilate, as narrated by John, that he perceived the groundlessness of the charge. He saw not the slightest evidence of any treasonable language or conduct; nor any necessity of proceeding to a public trial.

5. *More fierce.* More urgent and clamorous, exhibiting the intensity of their hatred and rage. They subsequently uttered threats against Pilate himself, if he should hesitate in accomplishing their wishes, John xix. 12. ¶ *Stirreth up.* See note on ver. 2. ¶ *All Jewry.* All Judea; throughout the province.

teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time.

8 ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad : for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him ; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 Then he questioned with him

¶ *From Galilee, &c.* Jesus commenced preaching in Galilee ; he had just arrived at Jerusalem, from that place. To whichever fact reference is here made, the idea is, that he had made this tumult through the whole land, from one end to the other.

6, 7. *Whether the man were a Galilean.* Pilate had many reasons for desiring to avoid responsibility in this matter ; believing, as he did, that Jesus was innocent, and at the same time perceiving the uncontrollable rage of the Jews. He therefore gladly seized this opportunity to escape from his unpleasant position, by transferring the case into the hands of Herod, who had jurisdiction over the Galileans. This was Herod Antipas, the same who had beheaded John the Baptist.

8. *Exceeding glad, &c.* Herod had before expressed a desire to see Jesus, Luke ix. 9 ; but not, as it would seem, under the influence of any very good motive. He had a vain curiosity to see some miracle ; and the hope of gratification made him *exceeding glad*. But it is evident, from what follows, that he had no desire to hear, for the sake of instruction. He regarded Jesus, as an impostor, as a troublesome subject, and was willing to silence him, even by violent means.

9. *Answered him nothing.* See notes on Matt. xxvii. 12, 14.

10. *Vehemently accused him.* They

in many words ; but he answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together ; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

13 ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people ; and

were urgent and violent, in their allegations of sedition and other treasonable practices against the government which they themselves hated.

11. *Men of war.* Soldiers. Herod probably travelled with a guard ; and it might have been imprudent for him to visit Jerusalem without one, for he was hated both by the Jews and by Pilate. ¶ *Sent him again to Pilate.* It does not appear for what reason Herod declined jurisdiction of the case. Perhaps, as the arrest was made in Judea, he held that the trial should be superintended by the ruler of that province.

12. *Made friends together, &c.* "What had been the cause of their quarrel is unknown. It is commonly supposed that it was Pilate's slaying the Galileans in Jerusalem, as related in Luke xiii. 1, 2. The occasion of their reconciliation seems to have been the civility and respect which Pilate showed to Herod in this case. It was not because they were united in *hating* Jesus, as is often the case with wicked men ; for Pilate was certainly desirous of releasing him, and both considered him merely as an object of ridicule and sport."—*Barnes*. Doubtless Herod regarded it as a compliment, a kind of propitiatory offering, when Pilate deferred to his authority in this case ; yet it may well be doubted whether Pilate designed it as such, in the first instance. See note on ver. 6, 7. He was willing

behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him;

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who, for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

however, that Herod should so regard it, and to avail himself of the advantage thus gained.

13-15. Pilate again remonstrated with the people, assuring them that not only himself, but Herod also, having examined the case, found no evidence that Jesus was *worthy of death*, or deserving of death. The charges against him were not proved; and Pilate desired to discharge him.

16. *I will therefore chastise him, &c.* As Pilate evidently regarded Jesus as an innocent person, why should he propose to chastise, or scourge him? This can only be regarded as a kind of temporizing policy; by doing a less wrong, he hoped to pacify the Jews, and avoid the necessity of a greater wrong. I say necessity, because he would not on any account so offend the Jews, in this matter, as to place himself in danger of being accused of unfriendliness to the Roman government. John xix. 12. This question was already settled in his mind. It remained, to adopt some plan, by which he might keep the Jews quiet, and preserve the life of Jesus; and for this purpose, I think, he proposed to scourge a person, whom he believed to be innocent, and in whom he found no fault. To such miserable shifts are men driven, when they allow themselves to be governed by *policy* rather than by *principle*.

17. *Must release, &c.* His proposition to release Jesus, in connexion with the scourging, was artfully though ineffectually made. It was customary to

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him; I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them

release one criminal, at every anniversary of the Passover. See note on Matt. xxvii. 15. The release of Jesus, as a criminal, would be regarded by the Jews as a public acknowledgment of his criminality, and the previous scourging taken as corroborative proof of the same fact. So they might be saved the mortification of seeing him fully acquitted, and gratified both at the pain and indignity inflicted on him by a public scourging, and by being able to represent him as a *malefactor* pardoned, not as a matter of justice, but as an act of pure clemency. By this artifice, it would seem that Pilate hoped to content the people and avoid using the greater violence which his own conscience condemned as unjust and iniquitous.

18-23. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 16-23. Parallel also with Mark xv. 7-14.

24. *It should be as they required.* Thus weakly did Pilate yield to the unreasonable clamor of the people, and commit a known wrong through fear of a possible evil. His fear came upon him, however, at the last, notwithstanding all his guilty efforts to avoid it. See note on Matt. xxvii. 2. And such a righteous recompense may every ruler or judge expect, who is so desirous of popular applause, or so fearful of popular disapprobation, as to disobey the promptings of his own conscience and the decisions of his own judgment, in order to obtain the one or avoid the other.

25. *For sedition and murder, &c.*

him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them,

The guilt of the Jews was thus aggravated, by representing Jesus as less worthy of clemency than a traitor and murderer. Peter refers to this matter, Acts iii. 14, in such a manner as might well cover the adversaries with confusion.

26. See note on Matt. xxvii. 32. ¶ *After Jesus.* Matthew and Mark say that Simon bare the cross; while John represents Jesus himself as "bearing his cross." John xix. 17. The narrative of Luke may serve to harmonize the others and show the truth of both. Jesus was exhausted by the previous agony of his mind, by the mockery and indignity of the soldiers and people, by the forms of a pretended trial, and by the scourging he had endured; and as he was physically unable to bear the burden, Simon was required to walk behind him, and support one end of the cross, while Jesus carried the other.

27. *Bewailed and lamented him.* It is consoling to reflect, that our blessed Lord, though despised and rejected of men, was not utterly forsaken in his hour of extremity. There were some faithful and true hearts, some tender and affectionate hearts, which sympathized with him; and in spite of the blasphemous execrations of the multitude, they openly and publicly expressed their sympathy. The chosen disciples had fled, not daring to brave the fury of a mob. (Perhaps John should be excepted. John xix. 26.) But certain females, true and devoted to the last, followed him to his cross, and remained until he gave up the ghost, comforting and assisting him according to their ability.

28. *Daughters of Jerusalem.* A common Hebrew phrase, meaning women

said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

of Jerusalem. ¶ *Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, &c.* Another Hebraism, meaning, weep not for me so much as for yourselves; weep rather for yourselves and for your children than for me. He did not forbid utterly this expression of their sympathy and grief. He wept with others who were afflicted, John xi. 35; and he would not prohibit others from manifesting similar sympathy. Yet he admonished them that a scene was approaching, which more imperiously demanded their tears; referring, as all agree, to the calamities which should attend the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans.

29, 30. By the striking figures, in these two verses, is conveyed an image of that unparalleled calamity mentioned by Matthew, xxiv. 19—22.

31. *In a green tree, &c.* This seems to be a proverbial expression. "Consult John the Baptist's expression, Matt. iii. 10; 'now, also, the axe is laid to the root of the trees;' namely, *then* when the Jewish nation was subdued to the government of the Romans, who were about to destroy it. And if they deal thus with me, a green and flourishing tree, what will they do with the whole nation, a dry and sapless trunk?" —*Lightfoot.* To the same effect, Barnes says, "By a green tree is represented evidently a man of truth and purity. And the meaning of the passage is, 'If they, the Romans, do these things to me, who am innocent and blameless, if they punish me in this manner in the face of justice, what will they not do in relation to this guilty nation? What security have *they* that heavier judgments will not come upon them? What desolations and woes

32 And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and

may not be expected, when injustice and oppression have taken the place of justice, and have set up a rule over this wicked people? Our Lord alludes evidently to the calamities that would come upon them by the Romans in the destruction of their city and temple." The proverbial character of the phrase is illustrated thus: "The good and just man is, by the prophets and Jews, represented under the metaphor of a green tree, or a tree whose leaves do not wither, Ps. i. 3; of a green olive tree, Ps. lxxviii. 8; of a green fir tree, Hos. xiv. 8; of a tree whose leaves are ever green, Jer. xvii. 8. Whereas of the wicked it is said, his branch shall not be green, Job xv. 32. Thus God by Ezekiel threatens, that he will cut off every green tree and every dry tree in Jerusalem, Ezek. xx. 47; that is, as it is interpreted, chap. xxi. 3, that he will cut off the righteous and the wicked. And it is proverbial among the Jews, that two dry sticks will burn a green one; that is, that the company of two wicked men will corrupt and bring judgments upon a good man."—*Whitby*.

32. *Two others, malefactors.* The common translation "two other malefactors," conveys the idea that Jesus was a malefactor, or evil-doer. Such is not the true idea. The others were malefactors; he was not; but all were led away and crucified together.

33. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 33, 35, 33.

34. *Further, forgive them, &c.* In this prayer, our Lord manifested the active exercise of that blessed principle which he inculcated upon his disciples. Matt. v. 44. He prayed not only that his persecutors, but that his murderers might be forgiven. He even urged, on their behalf, that they were not conscious what a crime they were committing. So far as the Roman soldiers were concerned, this was true, in its full extent; for we may well suppose they were utterly ignorant of his character; and indeed they can scarcely be regarded as moral agents, for they only obeyed the orders of their officers, as by military

the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

law they were obliged to do. The Jews, also, however criminal for shutting their eyes and their hearts against the evidence which Jesus had exhibited of his Messiahship, must still be considered ignorant, to some extent, of the enormity of the crime which they committed; for it is not to be supposed that they would knowingly crucify the Messiah, whose advent had so long been their hope and their subject of prayer. Moreover, Peter, when rebuking the Jews for their ungodliness in this very matter, and exhorting them to repentance, says, "now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your fathers," Acts iii. 17; and Paul declares, "had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. ii. 8. But whatever allowance he made for this comparative ignorance, it is nevertheless true, that the Jewish rulers, who were most active in this murderous mockery of justice, were most deeply criminal, both for their wilful blindness to the truth and stubborn resistance to conclusive evidence, John xv. 21—25, and also for the unholy passions which prompted them to procure the crucifixion of Jesus; for it was not a mistaken regard for justice, but envy, wrath, and deadly revenge, which led them on. To this consummation of their wickedness Jesus referred, by their filling the cup of iniquity, or the measure of their fathers. Matt. xxiii. 32. The apostles also uniformly speak of this transaction as an instance of most aggravated guilt, and one which called for and received vengeance to the uttermost. Yet, steeped in sin as were these unhappy individuals, even to their very lips, and knowing as he did, and as he had predicted, that a fearful punishment awaited them, our blessed Lord prayed that they might be forgiven. It may be observed, (1.) that he did not pray for the remission of their punishment; for this he knew must be administered according to the righteous law of God; and he had repeatedly predicted the terrible retribution which awaited them. (2.) He did pray that they

35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And a superscription also was written over him, in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,

might be forgiven; that is, that, having endured the appropriate reward of their iniquity, their sinful hearts might be so sanctified, that they should be reinstated in a condition of purity, and their sins and iniquities be remembered no more. Heb. viii. 12. (3.) A more unpromising case for conversion and forgiveness can scarcely be imagined. Seldom, if ever, have men sinned against such clear light, or sinned so foully. Yet for these our Saviour prayed. We may safely conclude, he would omit none, when supplicating mercy, and that we should omit none. (4.) We cannot doubt, that he prayed in faith, nor that his supplication was well-pleasing in the sight of God, and mercifully answered. And if granted in this case, we need not fear that his and our supplications for all men, everywhere, will be denied. It is good and acceptable unto God, that prayers should be offered for all, because he will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; and to impart this knowledge, and carry out the gracious plan of God, the same Jesus, who prayed for his murderers with his dying breath, also gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man. 1 Tim. ii. 1-6; Heb. ii. 9. It is well observed by Barnes, that "the greatest sinners through the intercession of Jesus may obtain pardon. God heard him, and still hears him *always*, and there is no reason to doubt that many of his enemies and murderers obtained forgiveness and life. Compare Acts ii. 37, 42, 43; vi. 7; xiv. 1." To this, I add, that there is no more reason to doubt that *all* "his enemies and murderers obtained forgiveness and life," according to his

## THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

prayer. They were all guilty; he prayed for all; and God is no respecter of persons.

35-39. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 37, 39-44. See also Mark xv. 26, 29-32, and John xix. 19-22.

40. *Rebuked him*, &c. The other evangelists represent both these malefactors as deriding our Lord. Luke alone notices the fact, that one of them manifested repentance, and implored favor and forgiveness. Probably both did mock, at the first; but afterwards one of them, being affected perhaps by the miraculous darkness which shrouded the earth, as were the centurion and those who were with him, was induced, like them, to believe that Jesus was a righteous man and the Son of God; see verse 47, and Matt. xxvii. 54. Accordingly he rebuked his mocking companion, who tauntingly requested Jesus to save himself and them, that is, from the cross, *if* he were the Christ; even as the Jews, in like manner, mocked, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God," ver. 35. ¶ *Dost not thou fear God?* The penitent thief was probably convinced, by what he had witnessed, that Jesus was peculiarly favored of God. And he admonished his companion that it was an offence against God to abuse or deride his chosen servant. ¶ *Same condemnation.* That is, condemned to the same kind of death; but not for the same cause, as is further explained in the next verse.

41. *We indeed justly.* Those who were crucified with Jesus had been thieves, or rather robbers. By the laws of the land their crime was punishable by death. Hence this one acknowledged

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

that crucifixion was the *due reward* of their deeds. ¶ *This man hath done nothing amiss.* Though condemned to the same kind of death, it was for no fault; he was innocent.

42. *Remember me.* This is to be understood as a supplication for favor. Remember me for good; be merciful to me; bless me. ¶ *When thou comest into thy kingdom.* "The faith of this thief is admirable; and kept even pace with that of the apostles, if, in some circumstances, it did not go beyond it. The apostles acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, and so doth he; with this addition, which I question whether they did so clearly own and know or not, namely, that Christ should reign and have his kingdom after his death. He seems to have a sounder judgment concerning Christ's kingdom, than the apostles themselves, as may be gathered from their question, Acts i. 6."—*Light-foot.* It is impossible to know, with certainty, what precise opinion this person had concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, or in what manner he was led to entertain such opinion. Whether he had heard Jesus preach before, or had been instructed by him on the cross, or was convinced by the marvels which he witnessed, we know not. He doubtless knew a Messiah was expected, who should establish a kingdom. He was convinced that Jesus was truly the Messiah; and besought his remembrance for good, when he should reign in his kingdom. So much appears plain. Beyond this, the subject is left in obscurity, which cannot be penetrated.

43. *I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* This address to the penitent thief has been variously interpreted. (1.) By some, it has been understood as an assurance of happiness, but not at any definite time; they have supposed the qualifying term *to-day* to belong to the first member of the sentence, thus,—I say unto thee to-day, or I now say unto thee, that thou shalt hereafter be with me in paradise. (2.) Others allow that *to-day* belongs to the last member of the sentence, and indicates the time when the penitent malefactor should be in *paradise*, but

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

deny that *paradise* denotes a future happy life; they say that, like *hades*, it means merely the state of the dead, generally, and hence understand our Lord to say, substantially, to-day we shall be relieved from our present torture, and shall sleep in death. (3.) Others, again, intimate doubts whether the passage be genuine. See Imp. Ver. note. But none of these suppositions seem to meet the circumstances of the case, as narrated by the evangelist. According to the first, the word *to-day* appears altogether superfluous, and the construction of the sentence unusual and unnatural;—the second represents the answer as having no perceivable relation to the petition; for while the thief implored favor in the Messiah's kingdom, he was told simply, what he already knew, that he should very soon die;—the third is a summary process of avoiding difficulties, of which some interpreters are altogether too fond; a process, which is not justified, in the present case, by any satisfactory authority. On the whole, I apprehend that the common interpretation of this passage is preferable to either of those here noticed, and is substantially correct; namely, that the penitent should, on that day, become happy. The word *Paradise*, which is transplanted from the Greek to the English, is said to be of Persian origin, and "signifies a garden or forest of trees, a park, in which sense it is used, Neh. ii. 8; Eccl. ii. 5; Cant. iv. 13. The Septuagint use the word *paradisus*, Gen. ii. 8, when they speak of the garden of Eden, in which the Lord placed Adam and Eve."—*Calmel.* The word was familiar to the Jews; and it was common for them to express this "kind wish for the dying or dead person, Let his soul be in paradise."—*Whitby.* It occurs, however, in only two other places in the New Testament, 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7; in which first named place it is evidently used synonymously with "the third heaven" in ver. 2, preceding. From its use in both Testaments, it seems to indicate a place or state of happiness; and very probably the idea attached to it by the Jews was similar to that of the Greeks concerning *Elysium*. By

44 And it was about the sixth hour and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 ¶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 Now, when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

50 ¶ And behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor: *and he was* a good man, and a just:

the use of this word, therefore, the malefactor would naturally understand our Lord to refer to a state of happiness. Yet I rely less on the *particular word* employed, than on the general circumstances of this case. The penitent acknowledged his own guilt, professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and besought favor in his kingdom; the reply of Jesus was confessedly favorable and gracious, and should be understood as an assurance that his petition would be granted, and that speedily; as if he had said, thou shalt enter my kingdom, even this very day, and enjoy happiness with me. We need not suppose him to affirm the truth of the peculiar ideas cherished by the Jews concerning paradise; it is sufficient that they regarded it as a state of happiness, and he used it in the same sense; and, not from the force of the word itself, nor from the Jewish fancies concerning it, but from the character of the petition, I doubt not our Lord used it, in his reply, to indicate happiness in the future life; for the petitioner expected to die on the cross, yet

51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them.) *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments: and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

**N**OW upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sep-

desired remembrance in the Lord's kingdom. And the subsequent facts show that the future life must have been referred to in the promise; for nothing occurred before the death of either, which corresponded with any reasonable idea of paradise.

44—46. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 45—51. See also Mark xv. 33—38; John xix. 28—30.

47—49. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 52—56. See also Mark xv. 39—41.

48. *Smote their breasts.* A common expression of terror and alarm. The wonders which they witnessed affrighted them.

50—56. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 57—61. See also Mark xv. 42—47.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

1—11. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 1—10. Parallel also with Mark xvi. 1—11.

1. *First day of the week.* Answering to our Sunday, which was consecrated as the day of public religious worship, because on that day the founder of Christianity arose from the dead. This was not the Jewish Sabbath, but



ulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

7 Saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sin-

the day succeeding it. ¶ *They came.* That is the women, who, after seeing Jesus placed in the tomb, made preparations to embalm the body, as soon as the Jewish Sabbath should end. Matt. xxv. i. 55, 56. They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and certain others, ver. 10.

4. *Much perplexed.* They did not yet believe in the doctrine of the resurrection. Like the apostles, they supposed the death of Jesus was fatal to their hopes. They had no expectation that he would arise on the third day, as is evident from their coming to embalm his body on that very day. When, therefore, they found not the body, they were perplexed, not able to understand what this should mean. From John's account, it seems that Mary Magdalene left the sepulchre immediately, without seeing the angels, and ran to inform the apostles that some one, as she supposed, had removed the body of Jesus; she then returned, and enjoyed the distinguishing favor of being the first human beholder of our blessed Lord after his resurrection. See note on Matt. xxviii. 9, and the narrative in John xx. 1—18.

8. *They remembered his words.* Like the apostles and the Jews generally, they were so confident that the Messiah would never die, but reign forever on the earth in a glorious temporal kingdom, that they understood not his mean-

ful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother of* James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

ing, when he predicted his death and resurrection. And when his death was accomplished, instead of being encouraged to hope for his resurrection, agreeably to the prediction, they abandoned themselves to despair, and seem to have forgotten entirely that he had spoken on the subject. When reminded, however by the angel, they *remembered his words*, concerning his crucifixion by sinful men, and his resurrection on the *third day*. They knew he had been crucified; they believed he had risen. They could more readily believe the angelic testimony, ver. 6, when their Master's own language was called to remembrance, ver. 7, 8.

11. *Idle tales.* Reports unworthy of credit. ¶ *Believed them not.* Never were men convinced, against stronger prepossessions. See preceding note.

12. *Then arose Peter, &c.* The eleven were together *mourning and weeping* over their disappointment and what they regarded as the utter ruin of the cause in which they had been engaged, when the women came with their strange and apparently incredible narrative. See Mark xvi. 10. Peter, with his usual impetuosity, without waiting for others, *ran unto the sepulchre*, to make personal examination. John went with him, however, and, being more active, arrived first at the sepulchre. John xx. 4. When Peter had found *the linen*

13 ¶ And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore fur-

longs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

*clothes laid by themselves*, that is, the grave-clothes in which the body had been wrapped, but could neither find the body itself nor discover by what means it had been removed, he *departed, wondering in himself*, or utterly perplexed and unable to account for *that which was come to pass*. As often as he had been forewarned of these things, and as solemnly as he had been rebuked for his language in respect to the warning, Matt. xvi. 21—23, one might suppose he would have readily comprehended the events which had occurred. But his eyes had been completely blinded by that dazzling vision of temporal glory, on which they had been fixed so long and so intently; and he was not able to discern spiritual truth. He had fallen from a giddy height. Three days previously, he firmly believed his Master would establish an earthly kingdom; and he was violently struggling for the principal place of honor and power. See note on Luke xxii. 31, 32. He had seen that Master in the hands of his enemies, and knew that he had been crucified. Subsequently, instead of possessing power over others, and receiving honor from men, he had himself been in such mortal terror as to cower at the glance of a maiden, and had become disgraced in his own eyes by cowardly and profanely denying his Master. In this state of desperation, and disappointment, and shame, he could not at once perceive the truth which ambitious and worldly hopes had before hid from his eyes; and he was lost in wonder and astonishment. Though he had been told of the vision of angels, and of their annunciation, in connexion with the absence of the body, and afterwards ascertained that the body was truly gone, it does not appear that he believed the remainder, or as yet exercised the slightest faith in the resurrection.

13. *Two of them*. That is, two of the disciples, but probably not of the apostles. One certainly was not an apostle, namely, Cleopas, ver. 18. He is supposed to be identical with Alpheus, and the father of James the Less. See note on Matt. x. 3. It has been

supposed that the other was Luke, who modestly omits his own name in the narrative. The circumstance that Luke relates this interview with the Lord so minutely, while the other evangelists omit it, favors this supposition. But no positive evidence has been discovered, to identify the companion of Cleopas. ¶ *Emmaus*. There were three places bearing this name, which signifies *hot baths*, in Palestine: one, now called Hamam, near Tiberias; one, "twenty-two miles from Lydda, and afterwards called Nicopolis," and one, about "sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half, north-west of Jerusalem."—*Calmet*. The two disciples were travelling to the last named place, on the day of the resurrection.

14. *Talked together of all these things, &c.* They could scarcely be expected to converse on any other subject. The circumstances which had occurred were so exciting, as fully to occupy the minds of those who felt themselves personally interested; and some of them were the theme of conversation throughout Jerusalem, ver. 18. These travellers had undoubtedly been followers of Jesus, and believed in him as the Messiah, though they had the common Jewish opinion of his character, ver. 21. Their hopes had been blasted by his death, and they did not yet believe in his resurrection, ver. 23, 24, though they had heard the report of the women before they left Jerusalem. It was natural that the *things which had happened* should form the subject of their conversation. Discouraged, they sympathized with each other. Perplexed, they endeavored to assist each other in discovering what was the truth in regard to the subjects which affected them so nearly. Thus they *communed*, or conversed, and *reasoned* together, ver. 15. We may reasonably suppose, that one principal subject of discussion was whether Jesus were truly the Messiah: on the one hand, he had died, which was inconsistent with their ideas of his character, and failed to establish such a kingdom as they expected; on the other, by his mighty words and deeds he had established a full convic-

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together*, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications

tion in their minds, that he was a true prophet before God, ver. 19. Another question of engrossing interest was, whether Jesus had risen, and was *alive*, according to the testimony of the women, which had filled them with *astonishment*, ver. 22. Not only the *fact* was astonishing, but very probably these disciples, like the apostles on a previous occasion, "questioned one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." Mark ix. 10. The apostles questioned, because they evidently supposed the language of Jesus to be figurative, and they were doubtful to what he referred. The disciples might well question and reason, also; for while they were conscious that the resurrection of Jesus, if a fact, was a *literal* fact, yet they were perplexed to understand in what manner he was raised, and in what form he would appear. This question, indeed, in reference to the resurrection of mankind generally, is still far from being fully comprehended by all Christians; but the wisest and the holiest among them entertain very different opinions. And if this be so, after the beaming of gospel light during the past eighteen centuries, it need not surprise us that these illiterate disciples should be unable to comprehend the truth, when it first flashed upon their minds. Thus were they doubtful and melancholy.

15. *Jesus himself drew near, &c.* They were anxiously, and in much perplexity, reasoning with each other, concerning the events which had befallen their Master, when he graciously appeared to instruct them and dispel their doubts.

16. *Their eyes were holden, &c.* "But their eyes were so affected, that they did not know him."—*Campbell*. Mark says that Jesus appeared, on this occasion, "in another form;" that is, that he did not so resemble the living person as to be immediately recognized. Mark xvi. 12. The expression in the text

*are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

may be considered somewhat figurative, as is thus noticed by Pearce: "Their eyes were holden, so as that they did not know him; that is, they were withheld, prevented, or hindered, from knowing him; see ver. 31. The eyes are here put for the men themselves; and the reason of their not knowing him is given by Mark, xvi. 12, who says that Jesus appeared to them in another form." This interpretation seems more natural, than to suppose that any miraculous effect was produced on the eyes of the disciples, whereby they were not able to perceive the exact features of our Lord, while they distinguished other objects with perfect accuracy. See note on ver. 31.

17. *What manner of communications, &c.* That is, what is the subject of your earnest conversation; or, "what subjects are these about which ye confer together?"—*Campbell*. ¶ *Are sad.* The hearts of the disciples were oppressed and overwhelmed with grief and perplexity; they bitterly lamented the crucifixion of their Master, they were in doubt and amazement respecting his resurrection, and painfully anxious concerning their own duty and fate, for the future. They were discouraged and knew not in what manner to seek relief.

18. *Cleopas.* See notes on ver. 13, and Matt. x. 3. ¶ *Art thou only a stranger, &c.* "Art thou alone such a stranger in Jerusalem, as to be unacquainted with the things which have happened there so lately?"—*Campbell*. This expresses the sense more clearly and definitely than the common translation. At the seasons of the great feasts, there was always a vast assemblage at Jerusalem, from all parts of Judea and even from foreign countries. See Acts ii. 7—11, where some of the regions are enumerated, from which the people had come to the feast of Pentecost, about seven weeks subsequent to the Passover. Those who thus came up to

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people :

Mount Zion, to worship the Lord of Hosts at his holy mountain, were called strangers, that is, not permanent residents in Jerusalem. In this sense, the word is used in the text. And the meaning is, of all the strangers in Jerusalem, art thou the only one who has not heard of these events? The contrast is not so much between residents and strangers, as between strangers in general and this individual in particular ; thus expressing, in the strongest possible manner, the surprise of the disciples, that a single individual, who had been in Jerusalem even for one day, could be ignorant of an event which had affected them so deeply. Nothing could be more true to nature, than this reply of the disciples to their unrecognized Lord. Thus, when we are deeply interested in events, especially such as fill us with grief, how natural it is to suppose that others also have knowledge of what has occurred, and are acquainted with the cause of our sorrow and sadness! When sickness or death has invaded our families, we are surprised if our acquaintances address us lightly, and appear unconscious of our grief or doubtful concerning its cause. Their cheerful language grates harshly on our ears, and we are chilled by their apparent lack of sympathy, and their disregard of our feelings. So the disciples, when questioned concerning the subject of their conversation and sadness, were surprised ; they did not answer the question directly ; but their reply only expresses their astonishment that any one could be ignorant of the painful events which had occurred, or could suppose their lamentation to have any other cause.

19. *A prophet.* The disciples had previously been cautious not to speak of Jesus as the Messiah, though they believed that such was his character. Indeed, they had been particularly charged by him, that they should not publicly proclaim him as the Messiah, until after his resurrection. See Matt. xvi. 20 ; xvii. 9 ; Mark viii. 30 ; ix. 9 ; Luke ix. 21. And, besides, these dis-

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeem-

ciples were now doubtful whether he were actually the Messiah ; for he had died, which was utterly inconsistent with what they supposed essential to his character, and in regard to his resurrection, their ideas were entirely vague, uncertain, and confused. There was a double reason, therefore, why they should not now call him the Messiah. But their faith in him as a prophet was by no means shaken, even by his violent death ; for they knew that many true prophets of God had been thus cut off from the earth. His words, such as no man ever uttered, and his deeds, such as no man could perform except by divine power, left them no room to doubt that he was a prophet. John iii. 2 ; vii. 46. ¶ *Mighty in deed and word.* Exhibiting divine energy both in his miracles and in his instructions. ¶ *Before God, and all the people.* Manifestly, publicly. So that God owned him, and the people regarded him as a distinguished teacher."—*Barnes.* "The sense is, that testimony [that is, of his prophetic character] was given from God, by his works ; and from men, by their faith in his word. Before God, that is, in the judgment of God, as often elsewhere."—*Rosenmüller.*

20. *To be condemned to death, &c.* See the process of condemnation and execution, fully narrated in chap. xxiii. The phrase, here used, is *eis krima thanatou*, (εἰς κρίμα θανάτου,) literally, *to the condemnation of death.* The common translation expresses the sense with sufficient exactness. It may be observed, however, that this word *krima* is rendered *damnation* more frequently than any other word in the New Testament. The word *damnation* occurs eleven times ; and in eight of these cases, the original is *krima*. See Matt. xxiii. 14 ; Mark xii. 40 ; Luke xx. 47 ; Rom. iii. 8 ; xiii. 2 ; 1 Cor. xi. 29 ; 1 Tim. v. 12 ; 2 Pet. ii. 3. By comparing the several cases, some of them may appear less terrific than they have been commonly regarded.

21. *We trusted.* We hoped, expect-

ed Israel : and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also

ed, believed. ¶ *That it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.* In other words, we did believe, before his crucifixion, that he was the Messiah, who would establish his kingdom on earth, deliver Israel from bondage, and exalt our nation above the Gentiles. Though they did not venture to call him the Messiah, ver. 19, yet they acknowledged that they had so regarded him, until that catastrophe occurred which was now the cause of their lamentation. "That should have redeemed Israel ; namely, in the sense that that nation had of a redemption which they hoped for from the Gentile yoke. But the poverty and meanness of Jesus gave them no ground to hope that any such thing should be brought about by arms, as that people had generally dreamed ; they hoped, however, it might have been miraculously accomplished, as their first redemption from Egypt had been."—*Lightfoot*. The word *meanness*, in the foregoing quotation, is used in its ancient sense, indicating merely low condition in life. It may perhaps be doubted, whether the disciples did not expect a kingdom would be established by force of arms, aided by a miraculous display of divine power. They certainly waited, with much impatience, for Jesus to assume regal power, and were ready, at all times, to lend their aid. Thus, when he had miraculously fed a multitude, there was a disposition manifested to "take him by force, to make him a king," John vi. 15 ; and when he approached Jerusalem for the last time, and changed his ordinary simplicity for dignity and splendor, so far as to ride instead of walking, the disciples enthusiastically proclaimed him as "the king that cometh in the name of the Lord," and made the welkin ring with their acclamations. Luke xix. 35—33. So deeply rooted in their minds was this Jewish hope of temporal glory under the Messiah, that it was not eradicated by all the instructions of Jesus. In vain he assured them that he should not establish such a kingdom ; that the Jewish nation should be destroyed and scattered ; that he himself should be crucified and

of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre.

23 And when they found not his

slain ; that his reign was spiritual, not physical ;—all this availed not to remove their long-cherished hope of earthly glory. They clung to it, to the very last ; disputing even for the chief places in this kingdom, while his predictions of his own death were yet ringing in their ears ; when it was crushed, by his death, they abandoned all as lost, and were overwhelmed with grief and despair ; and when he arose from the dead, this same hope was the first and dearest which sprung up in their bosoms. See Acts i. 6. This inveterate mistake, in regard to the true character of the Messiah both serves to explain much of the conduct of these two disciples and of the apostles and disciples generally, which would otherwise be inexplicable, and also furnishes convincing evidence that the resurrection of Jesus was actual ; for it was an event which they did not expect, nor did they believe it, until they were convinced under circumstances which exclude the suspicion of deception. See note at the end of Matt. xxviii. ¶ *Besides all this, &c.* The language of the disciples is somewhat incoherent, as might be expected from the confused and perplexed state of their minds. They seem here to pass suddenly from their cause of grief to their cause of perplexity and the subject of their *reasoning*. In the midst of their desolation they had been astonished by the report of the women that the Lord had risen. They remembered that he had frequently referred to the third day, as the day of resurrection ; but not knowing what was meant by the rising of the dead, Mark ix. 10, they had no definite ideas on the subject, and could neither feel confident that the report of the women was true, nor comprehend its meaning, if true. The connexion of their remarks appears less disjointed in the translation by Campbell ; "Beside all this, to-day being the third day since these things happened, some women of our company have astonished us," &c.

22, 23. *Certain women.* The two Marys, Salome, and others. See ver. 1—10 ; Matt. xxviii. 1—7 ; John xx. 1. ¶ *Vision of angels.* An appearance of

body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said : but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O

angels. The meaning is, that they had seen angels, or angels had appeared to them. See ver. 4; Matt. xxviii. 5; John xx. 12.

24. *Certain of them which were with us.* Certain men, that is, the apostles John and Peter, who went to verify the account given by the women. See ver. 12; John xx. 2—9.

25. *O fools.* This translation is unfortunate, as it conveys an idea of reproach, which is not implied in the original. Campbell renders it *thoughtless men*, which is much better. ¶ *Slow of heart, &c.* Dull, obtuse, slow to perceive and comprehend. The allusion is manifest. Jesus had repeatedly instructed his disciples, that precisely such events must occur, as had now filled them all with grief and disappointment. He had told them, all these things were necessary and according to ancient predictions. Had they understood him, they would have expected the event; and, having faith also in the resurrection, would have joyfully anticipated his reëpearance. But their eyes had been so intently fixed on an imaginary blessing, (see note on ver. 21,) that they had failed to discover the true good announced by the Saviour. Hence their disappointment. ¶ *All that the prophets have spoken.* That is, all which they had spoken concerning the Messiah. They had described his kingdom, in glowing terms and with earthly imagery. These descriptions the disciples misunderstood, and interpreted literally instead of spiritually. They had also described his death, and intimated his resurrection. See Isa. liii. But these descriptions the disciples had not comprehended. Afterwards, when they had received the Holy Ghost, they had a more correct understanding of the ancient prophecies. See Acts viii. 26—37.

26. *Ought not Christ, &c.* That is, the Messiah. These two terms, it

fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

should be remembered, are identical in their import, the one being Greek and the other Hebrew. As it had been clearly predicted that the Messiah should *suffer these things*, that is, should be ignominiously put to death, before entering into his glory, those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah should have expected such a termination of his earthly labors; and when the event occurred, it should have confirmed their faith, instead of destroying it. This our Lord proceeded to show, by a direct appeal to the prophets. See ver. 28. ¶ *To have suffered these things, and to enter, &c.* Rather to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory. The verbs are in the same tense. And when our Lord passed from mortal life, by suffering what had been predicted, he entered into glory.

27. *Beginning at Moses, &c.* That is, at the writings of Moses. Some interpret the verse, as if there were an ellipsis between *beginning* and *Moses*, and understand the meaning thus: beginning his discourse, or commencing this portion of it, he explained the predictions contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets, &c. Or we may understand the ellipsis after *Moses*, and construe the verse like Acts iii. 24, thus: beginning at Moses, and proceeding through all the prophets, he expounded, &c. This seems to me the more plain and natural construction. ¶ *He expounded.* He explained; developed the meaning of the ancient prophecies concerning himself, which they had not before understood. In such an exposition, while he showed the fulfilment of the prophecies in the persecutions and death which he had endured, he necessarily showed them, at the same time, that their former expectations of a temporal kingdom were unfounded, and that they had no reason to expect him to remain permanently on

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went : and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us : for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry

the earth. Consequently, his death should not disturb, but rather confirm, their faith in him as the Messiah.

28. *The village.* That is, Emmaus. ¶ *He made as though, &c.* No deception is indicated. The meaning is, he manifested no intention to stop ; but continued to walk as if he intended to pass through the village.

29. *Constrained him.* Persuaded ; urged ; manifested much anxiety that he should stop. They were deeply interested in his conversation and instructions, and earnestly desired to listen further to his language of wisdom and consolation. ¶ *Abide with us.* Tarry with us over night. It was now near the evening, and the disciples did not design to travel further. Some suppose this village was their home. However this be, they invited their companion to partake their hospitality for the night, doubtless hoping that, while they bestowed carnal things, he would minister to them in spiritual things. 1 Cor. ix. 11. Nor was this hope any impeachment of their generosity. Genuine hospitality is perfectly consistent with the hope of deriving pleasure or intellectual and spiritual profit from the guest. Such a hope had these disciples ; and the fruition exceeded all reasonable expectation, inasmuch as they thus entertained, not a mere angel, unawares, but the Lord of glory, their risen Master.

30. *Sat at meat.* Reclined at the table, to partake of the supper they had provided. ¶ *He took bread, and blessed it, &c.* As this office belonged to the master of the house, the attention of the disciples would naturally be excited, when their guest assumed it, if the supper were in their own house. If they were in a public house, and our Lord had the appearance of a religious teacher, as Lightfoot supposes, then he might have been expected to preside. However this be, they had been so much interested in his conversation, so much

with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him : and he vanished out of their sight.

moved by his exposition of the scriptures, ver. 32, and so much edified by his instructions, that it may well be supposed their eyes were fastened on him, like those of the Nazarenes, Luke iv. 20. The result is narrated in the succeeding verse.

31. *Their eyes were opened.* It is not intended that they were before blind ; but only that the obscurity of their mental vision was removed ; in other words, that they were enabled to recognize the truth which they had hitherto failed to perceive. To blind the eyes, and to open the eyes, are phrases often used with reference to the intellectual vision. See Matt. xiii. 15 ; John xii. 40 ; Acts xxvi. 18 ; Rom. xi. 10. We are not informed whether Jesus reassumed his natural appearance or in what other manner he enabled his disciples to recognize him. It is not unreasonable to suppose, from the manner in which he is represented to have broken and blessed the bread, that it was in this act that he stood forth revealed to the enraptured sight of his disciples. Perhaps he used the same form of words to which they had become accustomed, and which may have been peculiar to himself. It is enough, however, that he gave them satisfactory evidence, in whatever way, that he was indeed their Master, who had been dead, and was alive again. ¶ *Vanished out of their sight.* He disappeared ; was no longer seen by them. Some suppose there was nothing miraculous in this ; but that, while the disciples were overcome by surprise and amazement, Jesus withdrew from them. To me it appears more probable, both from the expression here used, which is literally, *he became invisible*, and from the similar circumstances recorded in John xx. 19—26, that his disappearance was miraculous ; or perhaps, rather, that his appearance was miraculous. If the resurrection-body of Jesus was material, then it required a miracle to enable it to pass

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things

were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

through closed doors, or to become invisible to mortal sight; but if it were spiritual, then it could become visible only by miracle. This question I shall not attempt to discuss here. But it is no more unreasonable, to believe that his body was spiritualized, at his resurrection, than that the same effect was wrought at his ascension; or that a spiritual body could become miraculously visible, than that a material body should thus become invisible.

32. *Did not our heart burn, &c.* Were not our hearts warmed? This denotes that they had been interested, and strongly moved in their feelings, by the conversation of our Lord. They remembered his earnest and merciful language; and their hearts as well as their eyes testified that they had seen the Lord. ¶ *Opened to us the scriptures.* Explained them; laid them open to view, so that their hidden and full meaning might be perceived, ver. 27.

33. *Rose up the same hour, &c.* Although it was now near night, and the disciples had not designed to travel further, yet they at once departed for Jerusalem, seven or eight miles distant, that they might give to the apostles the earliest possible intelligence of the Lord's resurrection. They would not withhold the information communicated to them. It had dried their tears and changed their sadness into joy; and they could not rest, until they had administered like consolation to their brethren in affliction.

34. *Saying, the Lord is risen indeed.* The eleven said this, before the two could communicate their intelligence. Either they were conversing on this subject, when the two disciples entered; or, seeing them enter, they exclaimed,

*the Lord has risen*, supposing them yet ignorant of the fact. But, in regard to some of the eleven, this was rather a matter of ardent hope than of firm belief. See ver. 37, 41; Mark xvi. 12—14; John xx. 24, 25. ¶ *Hath appeared to Simon.* To Simon Peter. We have no account of this appearance, or the circumstances attending it, except in this place, and in 1 Cor. xv. 5; from both which places it would appear, that Peter was allowed to see the risen Lord, before any other of the apostles enjoyed a similar favor. This was an act of extraordinary clemency to Peter, considering his recent lapse; he had repented bitterly, and this may have been designed to assure him of forgiveness and restoration to his former position and privileges.

35. *They told.* That is, the two disciples.

36. *Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.* According to John's account of this appearance, Jesus entered the room, when the doors were shut, and probably fastened, because they were thus shut through fear that the Jews would enter, to harm them. John xx. 19. His sudden and unaccountable appearance terrified his disciples, ver. 37. As has frequently been remarked, scarcely anything will so violently shake the strongest nerves, as an appearance believed to be supernatural. ¶ *Peace be unto you.* This was a common Jewish form of salutation; but on this occasion it was doubtless designed, not merely as a courteous address, but to calm their troubled minds, and to allay their fears. See note on Luke i. 13.

37. *A spirit.* See note on ver. 39.

38. *Why are ye troubled? That is,*



**39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle**

frightened, terrified. ¶ *Why do thoughts arise, &c.* The original means *doubtful thoughts*, that is, doubts, or suspicions. Their doubts or suspicions had reference to the question whether this were really their Master, or only a phantom or a disembodied spirit. They believed that spirits existed without bodies; though it does not clearly appear by what means they supposed such could become visible to the eye. But such was their belief; and they doubted whether it were not such a one which stood before them.

39. *Behold my hands, &c.* To remove their doubts, and to convince them that what they saw was a reality, and was in fact the body of their risen Lord, he exhibited his hands and feet, on which were to be discovered the marks of the nails by which he had been fastened to the cross, John xx. 25—27, and desired them to handle him, and thus obtain the surest evidence. ¶ *A spirit hath not flesh and bones, &c.* The common opinion concerning this passage is, that the body which the disciples thus handled was the identical body which was nailed to the cross, deposited in the tomb, and on the third day reanimated; that it was as truly flesh and bones, as before the crucifixion; and that it continued such, until it ascended from the mount of Olives. And this is undoubtedly the most plain and obvious meaning of the language employed, when considered by itself, disconnected with other circumstances. Yet, by some, it has been doubted whether this be the true import of our Lord's words. They have supposed that his resurrection-body was spiritual; that the change was actually wrought in the resurrection, which others suppose to have been wrought in the ascension,—for nobody believes that our Lord entered heaven with a body of flesh and bones, with whatever body he left the earth. In the advocacy of this view, after quoting Luke xxiv. 36, 37, and John xx. 19, 26, Professor Bush writes thus: "We have here the evidence of a body divested of the conditions of matter, at least as matter is commonly and philosophically defined. It is one endowed with the power of entering a room when the doors were closed, and

me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

all the ordinary avenues of access precluded. Such a body must have been spiritual; nor is this conclusion vacated by the mention of certain circumstances that would seem to be more appropriate to a material structure; such as the disciples coming and holding him by the feet and worshipping him; his commanding them to handle him and see that it was he himself, and not a mere intangible spirit void of flesh and bones; his commanding Thomas to put his hands into his wounded side; and his eating a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. In all this, we have no difficulty in recognizing a miraculous adaptation of the visible phenomena to the outward senses of the disciples, who were to be fully assured of the great fact of their Lord's resurrection, and of the identity of his person. But as the Saviour's true personality did not reside in *his* material body, any more than ours does in *ours*, so the proof of it could not really depend upon the exhibition of that body, although it be admitted that the requisite evidence could not reach their minds, while under the conditions of mortality, except through the medium of the outward senses.—And when we consider the object to be attained by such an illusion, we see nothing inconsistent or unworthy the divine impersonation of Truth in having recourse to it. A miracle, it is clear, must be admitted on any view. If his risen body was material, it must have been miraculously rendered spiritual when he suddenly appeared in a room closed and barred, and when he as suddenly vanished from sight. If it was spiritual, it must have been miraculously made to assume material attributes on the same occasion. Between these alternatives we are left to take our choice. For ourselves we do not hesitate a moment." One additional consideration is not without its weight. The object of Christ's appearance to his disciples, at this time, was to convince them of his resurrection. If he was then clothed with a spiritual body, a miracle was necessary to make that body visible and tangible, so as to afford the necessary evidence of identity of person. But if he was clothed with a material body,—the identical body in

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb.

43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

which he dwelt before his crucifixion,—the miracle by which that body was enabled to pass through a closed and barred door was not necessary to the convincing of the disciples; on the contrary, it would, and in fact did, *terrify* and *affright* them. They had never seen their Master do thus before, and needed not this proof of his identity; it did not carry conviction to their minds; but, instead of recognizing their Master at once, they thought it was a spirit, ver. 37. It is not consistent with that economy of miracle, everywhere apparent, that one should have been wrought thus unnecessarily.

40. *Shewed them his hands and his feet.* By this we are doubtless to understand, that he exhibited the marks of the nails, by which he had been fastened to the cross. Whether his body was now material or spiritual, the resemblance was perfect,—necessarily so, to give full satisfaction to the disciples. See note on ver. 39.

41. *Believed not for joy.* Heretofore, they had been depressed, through unbelief. The change from despair to joy was so sudden and so great, that they were amazed and bewildered. To them, as it has often happened to others, the fact seemed too good and too glorious to be true; it seemed impossible that their Lord actually stood before them; and they were fearful to believe, lest they should again suffer bitter disappointment. The description is perfectly true to nature. ¶ *Meat.* Food of any kind.

42, 43. To give them the more full satisfaction, our Lord ate a *piece of a broiled fish and of a honey-comb*. This circumstance has been understood to prove that the body in which he appeared was veritable flesh and blood; and such is doubtless the most plain

44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

meaning of the passage, disconnected from other facts. But it is alleged, on the other hand, that *eating* is not inconsistent with the supposition that the body of Jesus was actually spiritual. The passage in Gen. xviii. 8, is referred to for illustration. Three angels appeared to Abraham, and *did eat* of the material food which he prepared for them. Many suppose, from ver. 13, 17, 20, 33, that one of these was actually the Lord Jesus. Those who believe that angels might eat, or appear to eat, in the sight of Abraham, will find no difficulty in believing that Jesus might do the same, in the sight of his disciples, even though clothed with a spiritual body. See note on ver. 39.

44. *These are the words, &c.* Some understand him to mean, my words are fulfilled, or this is the fulfilment of my words. Perhaps, however, we should understand him merely to refer to his former words, to refresh their minds, preparatory to demonstrating the truth of the predictions to which he called their attention, ver. 45—47, and of his former interpretation and application of them. ¶ *While I was yet with you.* That is, before my crucifixion. ¶ *Moses—prophets—psalms.* The Jews divided the Old Testament into three portions; Moses, the Prophets, and the holy writings, or Hagiographa. Our Lord probably recognized the same division, changing the name of the Hagiographa, and calling it Psalms, the Book which stood at the head of this general portion. ¶ *Concerning me.* He refers particularly to the predictions concerning his death and resurrection.

45. *Opened he their understanding, &c.* See note on ver. 31. To open the understanding is to enable one to understand. The disciples had often heard him say that he should die and rise

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day :

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

again ; but they understood not what he meant. Neither did they understand the ancient prophecies relative to these events, ver. 44. But now, as the truth had been demonstrated by an exact fulfilment of the prediction, Jesus made them comprehend the *scriptures* which testified concerning him. John v. 39. They had supposed the Messiah could not die ; and hence understood Jesus to speak figuratively, when he mentioned his death ; and, when he actually died, they lost their faith in his Messiahship. But by making them understand that the scriptures predicted both his death and resurrection, he gave them assurance that their faith in him was not misplaced, and that it should be confirmed rather than weakened, by what had occurred. Their doubts whether he were the Messiah were thus removed ; but their mistake concerning his character was not corrected until a subsequent period. See Acts i. 6. The present instruction related to his death and resurrection, not to the nature of the kingdom in which he was to reign.

46. *Thus it is written.* The passages to which he referred are not mentioned. We may safely conclude, however, that he directed their attention to Moses, the prophets and the psalms, ver. 27, 44, and quoted their predictions concerning his death and resurrection. ¶ *It behoved.* It became ; it was proper ; it was consistent with his character. ¶ *Christ.* Rather the Christ, that is, the Messiah ; the article is used in the original. The idea is, it was proper that the Messiah should die and rise again, and perfectly consistent with his character, because it had been predicted of him, by holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, that he should do so. A correct knowledge of the scriptures would lead men to expect the occurrence of precisely such events.

47. *Repentance.* See note on Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *Remission of sins.* See note

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 ¶ And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led them out as

on Matt. xxvi. 28. ¶ *In his name.* It was proper, that the gospel, which leads men to repentance by its manifestation of divine goodness, and gives promise of salvation or remission of sins, should be proclaimed in the name and by the authority of him who sealed its truth with his own blood. Thus Paul speaks of the "gospel of God," with reference to its original Author, but calls it also the "gospel of his Son," with reference to its promulgator among men. Rom. i. 1, 9. ¶ *Among all nations.* When first sent out to preach, the apostles were required to confine their ministrations to the Jews ; but now their commission was enlarged, and they were to teach all nations. See note on Matt. xxviii. 19. All nations needed this blessing, for all were sinful and guilty, Acts xvii. 30 ; Rom. iii. 9—19 ; and it was designed for the benefit of all, Acts iii. 25 ; Rom. v. 12—21 ; viii. 20, 21 ; 1 Tim. ii. 4—6. ¶ *Beginning at Jerusalem.* The first proclamation of the gospel was to be made in the holy city, and to the chosen people, though the one had become defiled and the other degenerated and guilty. The apostles were obedient. They commenced their labors in the midst of their inveterate enemies. See Acts, ch. ii., iii., iv. But they extended their labors to the Gentiles also, when the gospel had been rejected by the Jews. Acts xiii. 46.

48. *Ye are witnesses of these things.* That is, of the fulfilment of the predictions concerning the life, death, and resurrection, of the Messiah, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. And most nobly and powerfully did they bear testimony, at the hazard of their lives. See Acts ii. 22—32 ; iii. 12—26.

49. *I send the promise of my Father,* &c. Matt. x. 19, 20 ; John xiv. 16, 17, 26. This promise was, that they should have the special aid and guidance of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *Tarry ye,* &c. They were not yet qualified to commence their

far as to Bethany : and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

ministry. They neither possessed the requisite miraculous powers, nor had the spirit yet led them into all truth. John xvi. 13. Jesus would have them properly prepared for the labor required of them. ¶ *Power from on high.* Namely, miraculous power, which was manifested immediately after they received the Holy Ghost, and through its energetic influence in speaking divers languages before unknown to them, healing the sick, and other mighty works. This power was granted, and the promise fulfilled, on the day of Pentecost. See Acts, ch. ii.

50. *Bethany.* See note on Matt. xxi. 1. ¶ *Lifted up his hands, and blessed them.* This last earthly act of our Lord was consistent with his whole character. He came to bless ; he taught to bless ; he blessed children and men, while he lived ; he invoked a blessing on his murderers, while expiring on the cross ; and now, about to leave his disciples, he gave them a parting blessing, and ascended to his Father, where he liveth to bless the children of men for evermore.

51. *While he blessed, &c.* He departed while invoking God's blessing and bestowing his own. It is remarkable that neither Matthew nor John mention the ascension, and Mark omits all the particulars connected with it. Perhaps this omission may be accounted for, by the fact that the ascension was so universally believed by Christians, and one not at all likely to be forgotten, that it was considered less necessary to record it particularly than those other facts and doctrines, which, in the course of time, might be lost or perverted. If it be said that all mention the resurrection, which was also

52 And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy :

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

universally believed by Christians, and would be no more likely to be forgotten ; it may be replied, that the evangelists do not so much mention the *fact*, as the *evidence* of it. They show that the proof was perfect and conclusive. This being established, succeeding generations, knowing the proof, would not doubt the fact ; and if convinced of this, they would believe in the ascension also.

52. *Worshipped him.* Rendered homage to him ; acknowledged that he was Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 11. ¶ *With great joy.* They had no doubts, now. They had seen him who was dead, and alive again, ascend up into heaven ; and they believed he would fulfil all his promises, and bestow all the blessings of which he had given assurance.

53. *Continually in the temple.* They did not hide themselves, as heretofore. They had confidence towards God, even now ; and from the day of Pentecost which was not more than ten days subsequent to this period, nothing was able to shake their faith in God and his Son, or to turn them aside from the path of their duty. Thenceforward they publicly defended the cause of him whom they had once deserted, and remained faithful even until death. ¶ *Praising and blessing God.* The proof of their Master's Messiahship was perfect ; and they blessed God for thus gloriously finishing the work. They blessed him for the rich grace he had manifested, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world, and confirming his mission by proofs which none could gainsay nor resist. ¶ *Amen.* This word is omitted by Griesbach and Knapp, and by most critics and commentators.

# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE

### GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

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THIS Gospel was probably written about A. D. 98 ; though some assign a date as early as A. D. 68. Among other arguments for its late date, may be mentioned the omission of all the prophetic references by our Lord to the destruction of Jerusalem. Before that event occurred, all the sacred writers frequently referred to it, as is manifest from an inspection of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. Afterwards, there was less occasion to mention it, partly because the event was known to have verified the prophecy, and partly because it was no longer necessary for the disciples to be on their guard against the danger of perishing in the general destruction, and they no longer needed the assurance that they should obtain rest, by the prostration of the persecuting Jews. Moreover, the particularity with which this evangelist explains the Jewish names and customs indicates that he wrote for the information of those who, by distance of place or lapse of time, were unacquainted with them. Similar explanations occur in the other Gospels ; but they are less frequent and particular. "The reason of which may be, that, when St. John wrote, many more Gentiles, and of more distant countries, had been converted to Christianity ; and it was now become necessary to explain to the Christian church, thus extended, many circumstances which needed no explanation while its members belonged only to the neighborhood of Judea, and while the Jewish polity was still in existence."—*Horne*, *Introd.*, iv. 289.

Its design is distinctly announced in ch. xx. 31 ; namely, to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, that believers might have life, through faith in his name. It is supposed by many, that the evangelist had special reference to certain heretical doctrines concerning our Lord, which had thus early been introduced by the Gnostics. The first eighteen verses of the Gospel are supposed to furnish evidence of this fact. Certain it is, that the discourses which he relates are chiefly those which illustrate the origin, nature, and character, of the Son of God, and the precise object of his mission. His intention seems to have been, not so much to give a full and connected history of our Lord's ministry, as to complete what was lacking in the other histories,—especially in regard to the points before named.

From the earliest age of the church, this Gospel has been unanimously ascribed to John, "that disciple whom Jesus loved," and who was permitted to recline on his bosom. Its authorship was not questioned by the early adversaries of Christianity, and its canonical authority has been universally admitted by Christians.

John was son of Zebedee and Salome, and a younger brother to James the Greater. His mother, Salome, is said by Theophylact to have been a daughter of Joseph, (the husband of Mary,) by a former marriage. Whether on this account, or in consequence of his amiable and affectionate disposition, this apostle was regarded with peculiar tenderness by our Lord, and admitted to the closest and most confidential intimacy. He was selected, with James and Peter, to witness the transfiguration, the raising of the ruler's daughter, and the agony in the garden; and to him alone was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus. See ch. xix. 26, 27. He was early called to the apostleship, Matt. iv. 21, 22; and he was active and zealous in the performance of his ministry. See Acts, ch. ii., iii., iv., viii. Ecclesiastical historians inform us, that the latter part of his life was spent in Asia Minor, chiefly at Ephesus; that he was banished, near the close of Domitian's reign, to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse; that he subsequently returned to Ephesus, wrote his three Epistles and this Gospel, and died in that city, about A. D. 100, in the one hundredth year of his age. A characteristic anecdote is preserved of him. When very aged and unable to preach, he was accustomed to exhort the church at every meeting, "Little children, love one another." And when some inquired, why he so constantly reiterated this exhortation, he replied, "Because it is the Lord's command; and if it be obeyed, this alone is sufficient." The same spirit is manifest, throughout the Gospel and Epistles of this "beloved" and loving apostle; and some have suggested, that he is thus sufficiently identified as the author, even if there were no other evidence of the fact.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

## CHAPTER I.

**I**N the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,

## CHAPTER I.

1—18. These verses contain what may be styled the Proem or Introduction to John's Gospel. Their interpretation is confessedly attended with some difficulties. Various and widely different theories have been adopted by different commentators. By Trinitarians, the Logos, translated Word, is understood to mean our Lord Jesus Christ; and the whole passage, to prove his supreme divinity.

But the idea that our Lord Jesus Christ was verily and absolutely the supreme God, "the same in substance, and equal in power and glory," with the Father, is not easily reconciled with the uniform description of him by the other evangelists and apostles, and by John also in the remainder of his gospel. They describe him as praying to God for blessings which he desired, sometimes even "with strong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7; thanking God for favors bestowed; professing his dependence on God; commending to him his spirit, in the hour of dissolution; and ascending to him, after his resurrection. And it is worthy of remark, that some of the most striking instances of these facts are recorded by John. Witness the prayer and thank-offering, chap. xvii.; our Lord's assurance to his disciples, that the Father would bestow the Holy Spirit on them, or send them the Comforter, xiv. 16, 26; his declaration that he could of himself do nothing, but depended on the Father's assistance, v. 19, 30; and his language to Mary Magdalene, when he assured her that although he had not yet ascended to his Father, he should ascend very soon, xx.

and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him;

17. It does not appear credible that John should first represent his Master as the supreme God, and then record his Master's testimony to the contrary; or, more plainly, that the spirit of truth should assert, in the introduction to this gospel, what it manifestly contradicts, in other portions of it.

A different interpretation is given by Norton. The importance of the subject will justify a somewhat long quotation. "Let us now examine whether the language of the apostle can be better explained, if we understand him as using the term Logos merely to denote the attributes of God manifested in his works. It was his purpose, in the introduction of his gospel, to declare that Christianity had the same divine origin as the universe itself; that it was to be considered as proceeding from the same power of God. Writing in Asia Minor for readers, by many of whom the term Logos was more familiarly used than any other, to express the attributes of God viewed in relation to his creatures, he adopted this term to convey his meaning, because, from their associations with it, it was fitted particularly to impress and affect their minds; thus connecting the great truth which he taught with their former modes of thinking and speaking. But upon the idea primarily expressed by this term, a new conception, the conception of the proper personality of those attributes, had been superinduced. This doctrine, then, the doctrine of an hypostatized Logos, it appears to have been his purpose to set aside. He would guard himself, I think, against being understood to countenance it. The Logos, he teaches, was not the agent of God, but God himself. — It is

and without him was not any thing

then of the attributes of God, as displayed in the creation and government of the world, that St. John speaks under the name of 'the Logos.' To this name we have none equivalent in English, for we have not the conception which it was intended to express. In rendering the first eighteen verses of St. John's Gospel, I shall adopt the term 'Power of God.' It is, perhaps, as nearly equivalent as any that we can conveniently use. But in order to enter into the meaning of the passage, we must associate with this term, not the meaning alone which the English words might suggest, according to their common use, but the whole notion of the Logos, as present to the mind of the apostle. Adopting this term, we may say that the Power of God, personified, is the subject of the introductory verses of his gospel. It is first said to be God, and afterwards to have become a man. It is first regarded in its relation to God in whom it resides, and afterwards in its relation to Jesus through whom it was manifested. Viewed in the former relation, what may be said of the Power of God is true of God; the terms become identical in their purport. Viewed in the latter relation, whatever is true of the Power of God is true of Christ, considered as the minister of God. His words were the words of God, his miracles were performed by the power of God. In the use of such figurative language, the leading term seldom preserves throughout the same determinate significance; its meaning varies, assuming a new aspect according to the relations in which it is presented. Thus an attribute may be spoken of as personified, then simply as an attribute, and then again as identified with the subject in which it resides, or the agent through whom it is manifested. In regard to the personification of the Logos by St. John, which is a principal source of embarrassment to a modern reader, it was, as I have said, inseparable from the terms in which the conception was expressed, the actions ascribed to the Logos being of a personal character, and the use of the neuter pronoun being precluded by the syntax of the Greek Language."—*Statement of Reasons*, pp. 241—244. A similar theory is adopted by Lindsey, and approved by Lardner, Priestley, Wakefield, and others; in

made that was made.

which, however, *Wisdom* is used instead of *Power*, as the translation of *Logos*. For myself, I would prefer the word *Energy*, which seems to express the idea with more exactness; *wisdom* signifies right knowledge, or, figuratively, ability to know; *power*, the ability to act or perform; *energy* combines in itself somewhat of the meaning of both the others, and hence appears more appropriate to denote the manifestation of God, in the creation of the world and in the language and miracles of his Son. *Logos* literally means *word*; but this may as well figuratively denote energy, as power or wisdom.

1. *In the beginning.* John adopted the same form of expression which Moses employed in the commencement of his history, Gen. i. 1, and very probably the coincidence was not accidental. He, like Moses, was about to speak of the creation of the world, and of the divine energy by which it was accomplished. Even if the phrase do not indicate a strict eternity, it refers, at least, to a period prior to the creation, as the cause must necessarily have existed before the effect,—the energy, before it accomplished the creation. But whatever may be its precise force, as used by Moses, the phrase here seems to denote eternity, if, as I suppose to be the fact, it has reference to the existence of a divine attribute; for as God is perfect and unchangeable, his energy and all his attributes must be coëval with his existence. It should be observed, that John is speaking of the simple existence of the attribute, in this place, while Moses refers to a particular manifestation of it. Hence one may have indicated a limited, while the other must have indicated an unlimited, duration, by the same form of words. ¶ *Was the Word.* The Logos, the Energy of God. It had been a philosophic doctrine, that certain beings, or attributes personified, styled æons, emanated from the Deity, at sundry times; one of whom was called the Logos, by whom it was supposed the world was created. Some of the converts to Christianity, who had been previously instructed in this philosophy, did not abandon their former opinions on this point, but incorporated them with the genuine doctrines of Christ. Against this error, the apostle is supposed to



#### 4 In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.

direct his testimony ; asserting that the world was created, not by such a personal emanation from the Deity as philosophy dreamed, but by the direct energy of God himself ; that energy, which was eternal as his own existence, and which was subsequently manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *The Word was with God.* In like manner, when Wisdom is personified by the author of the Proverbs, she is made to say, when God created the heavens, and earth, and sea, "then I was by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Prov. viii. 30. But no one supposes that Wisdom is here used as the name of a being distinct from the Deity. The idea is, that his wisdom, like himself, was everlasting ; that he had never been destitute of wisdom. So in this case. God's energy had never been wanting ; it had always been present to him, as an inseparable attribute. Besides, the preposition, here used, among its many shades of meaning, sometimes signifies *of*, or *belonging to* ; so that the phrase may mean that this energy was a characteristic of God, his property, so to speak, something which exclusively belonged to or inhered in himself. ¶ *And the Word was God.* So absolutely was his energy identified with himself, that it might appropriately be called God. Thus does the apostle, in the strongest possible manner, affirm that the creation, ver. 3, was accomplished by the supreme God, not by a personal emanation from himself, but by his own indwelling energy. Not altogether dissimilar is a form of speech, often used now, even in this matter-of-fact age, when the highly figurative language of the East falls strangely on our ears ; we say that *God may be seen in his works*, meaning, that his works bear the impress of his divine energy ; and thus do we speak of his energy and himself as one and the same. To the same effect is the language of Paul :—"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse ; because that when they knew God, they glorified him not," &c. Rom. i. 20. 21. How knew they God ? By discerning his power and divinity, in his works ;

so that seeing his power and Godhead is made equivalent to knowing God. Thus also our Saviour, appealing to the miracles which he wrought, argued that the divine power or energy, manifested by them, yielded sufficient proof that they were, not simply wrought by divine power, but truly the works of God. John v. 36 ; x. 37, 38 ; xiv. 9—11.

2. *The same was in the beginning with God.* The sentiment, already expressed in ver. 1, is here repeated, that a more distinct and emphatic condemnation of the philosophic fancy of æons might be understood. It is not, however, a mere repetition ; for what was there implied is here declared positively ; namely, that the energy, which had always existed, which was with God and in God, had been with God from the beginning. It had never been separated from him, nor united to him anew ; but was always with him, inherent in the Godhead.

3. *All things were made by him.* We should say, in plainer speech, were made by *it*. But the pronoun in the Greek is masculine, because the syntax of the language requires it, and because, while the divine energy is personified, it is proper to speak of it as a person, not as a thing or an attribute. Thus it is written of Wisdom, when in like manner personified, "she standeth in the top of high places,"—"she crieth at the gates,"—"her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. iii. 17 ; viii. 2. 3. But no one supposes that an individual created female is here intended. So neither did John intend to represent any individual, in any sense whatever distinct from the Deity, as the creator of all things ; on the contrary, this is the very idea which he opposed, and in condemnation of which he declared that all things were made by that divine energy which had always existed as an inseparable attribute of God himself. ¶ *And without him, &c.* The same idea, expressed in a different form, according to a common Hebrew usage. The first member of the parallelism asserts, that God by his divine energy created all things ; the second, that nothing was created by any other power. Thus was condemned not only the Platonic fancy that the universe was created by an individual emanation from

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

God, but also that other fancy, of Persian origin, that good and evil were created by different beings. The same opinion is referred to and condemned in the word of the Lord by his prophet:—"I am the Lord, and none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." Isa. xlv. 6, 7. See also Rev. iv. 8—11.

4. *In him was life.* "Life, according to the tenets of this false philosophy, was one of the highest æons; Light was another of the same order, and darkness an antagonist being, or æon, to Light. But John shows, that Life and Light were not particular and separate spirits, but were inherent in the creative Word, in God, and were derived from him, and him alone, to bless mankind."—*Livermore*. A different view is given by Norton, who translates the verse thus:—"In him was the source of blessedness; and the source of blessedness was the light for man." He adds this note on the word which he renders "source of blessedness:" "Ζωή, (*zoi*), rendered in the common version *life*. It is here, however, used in the sense of *blessedness*, as often in the New Testament. But the blessedness spoken of is that which is *communicated*, not that which is *enjoyed*, by the Logos. I do not perceive, therefore, that the sense of the original can be expressed more concisely in English than by the words which I have used. This blessedness is communicated through the revelation of religious truth; the intellectual *light*; not 'of men,' but 'for men.' In other words, the revelation made by the Power of God through Christ, which is the light of the moral world, is the source of blessedness to men." More briefly, the same divine energy, which created the world, also communicated that spiritual light which should purify and bless men; and, in order to communicate this light, that energy became flesh, or was manifested in the person, language, and conduct, of Jesus Christ, ver. 14.

5. *The light shineth in darkness.* Light is often put for truth, and darkness for ignorance, in the scriptures. When our Lord appeared to reveal the

6 ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness,

glory of divine truth, darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Isa. lx. 2. And the moral and intellectual condition of the mass had not materially changed, when John wrote his gospel. With striking propriety might he say the light shineth in the midst of darkness. Notwithstanding the moral and mental obscurity and lack of vision among the people, the light of revelation still shone with a mild and steady lustre. It was disregarded *then*; but in due time, Gentiles were to come to this light, and kings to the brightness of its rising. ¶ *The darkness comprehended it not.* Did not perceive it; was not penetrated by it; was not illuminated. For a time, the light of revelation was unable, so to speak, to penetrate the thick darkness which shrouded the minds of men. Or, without figure, men were so profoundly ignorant of spiritual truth, and so entirely under the dominion of error, that when the truth was revealed, it did not obtain ready access to their minds.

6. *There was a man sent, &c.* That is, John the Baptist. See note on Matt. iii. 1. It is said to have been a heresy, current in the days of the apostle, that the æon Light descended upon John, and endowed him with superior knowledge. Indeed, some believed he was the promised Messiah. This is evident from the inquiries made of him, Luke iii. 15, John i. 19—21. He had many disciples, even after Jesus commenced preaching, Matt. ix. 14; and, long after our Lord's ascension, we find at Ephesus, in which city many suppose this gospel was written, sundry disciples of John, who had kept themselves so entirely aloof from the disciples of Jesus, that they had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Acts xix. 1—3. It was one object of the apostle, to correct the erroneous opinions of men concerning John the Baptist. Hence he proceeds, in the succeeding verses, to show, that John was not the Light, or the medium through whom it was communicated to men, which he confirms by the testimony of John himself.

7, 8. *Came for a witness.* He came, as the voice of one crying in the wilder-

to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that

Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

ness, and announcing the approach of one who was divinely commissioned to enlighten and bless mankind, ver. 9, and Luke iii. 1—6. And when that messenger appeared, John pointed him out, as the Son of God, ver. 29—34. ¶ *To bear witness of the Light.* Either of the divine revelation which was about to be made by Jesus; see Luke iii. 16, where the baptism with the Holy Ghost may denote the purifying effect wrought on the heart through the power of truth; or, perhaps, by a slight change of figure, the Light may be supposed here to denote Jesus, who was the medium of that divine revelation, or the mediator of a better covenant. If the latter be the true meaning, then this passage may be regarded as the first distinct or direct reference to Jesus, as an individual, in this gospel. But others suppose that Light is used for the divine energy which is “the source of the light, the revealer of religious truth.”—*Norton.* This best harmonizes with ver. 10. ¶ *Through him.* That is, through John. It was the object of his mission to arouse men from their lethargy by announcing the speedy manifestation of God’s mighty power and grace in the person and revelation of his well-beloved Son. This he did; he produced a great sensation among the Jewish people, and induced them to expect that the Messiah was at hand; but, unfortunately for them, they were so entirely blind to his true character, that, when he appeared, they neither acknowledged him nor believed his revelation, ver. 10, 11. ¶ *Not that Light, but—witness of that Light.* The divine energy, the source of light, was not manifested in John, but in him to whom John gave witness. He testified that the kingdom of God was near, when the power of God should be visibly displayed on earth. “The testimony of John was peculiarly valuable, on the following accounts: (1.) It was made when he had no personal acquaintance with Jesus of Nazareth, and of course there could have been no collusion, or agreement to deceive men. John i. 31. (2.) It was sufficiently long before he came, to excite general attention, and to fix

the mind on it. (3.) It was that of a man acknowledged by all to be a prophet of God, ‘for all men held John to be a prophet.’ Matt. xxi. 26. (4.) It was for the *express purpose* of declaring beforehand that he was about to appear. (5.) It was *disinterested*. He was himself extremely popular. Many were disposed to receive him as the Messiah. It was evidently in his power to form a large party, and to be regarded extensively as the Christ. This was the highest honor to which a Jew could aspire; and it shows the value of John’s testimony, that he was willing to lay all his honors at the feet of Jesus, and to acknowledge that he was unworthy to perform for him the office of the humblest servant.”—*Barnes.*

9. *That was the true Light, &c.* “The true light, which shines on every man, was coming into the world. That is, the Power of God, the Logos; so called because he is the source of the light, the revealer of religious truth.”—*Norton.* Jesus is sometimes figuratively styled the “light of the world,” because through him that light was manifested; he proclaimed to men the glorious revelation of truth, by appointment of God, aided by the divine energy. For a similar reason, he gave the same appellation to his disciples, styling them the “light of the world,” Matt. v. 14. Yet to neither of these, does the apostle seem to refer in this place; but rather to that divine energy, which, having created all things, would also enlighten every man. For this purpose was the revelation of truth designed. And it is to be observed, that the true Light, here mentioned, will not be partial in its operation, but will enlighten all. This is in strict accordance with the revealed will of God, that all men shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and that all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. 1 Tim. ii. 4; Heb. viii. 11. We are not to understand that all had been enlightened, when the apostle wrote, even of his own generation. The word *lighteth*, though in the present tense, has the force of the future also. The idea is that the work had been commenced

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become

that it was then in operation ; and that it should be fully completed, and all men be enlightened, in due time.

10. *He was in the world, &c.* That is, the divine energy, which created the world, was manifested in the world, and was not recognized by men. The reference may be to the manifestation of God's wisdom and power in the works of his hands, as in Rom. i. 20 ; or, more probably, to its manifestation in Jesus Christ, which is described in ver. 14.

11. *He came unto his own, &c.* "He came to his own home, and his own family did not receive him."—*Campbell*. "He came to his peculiar possession, and his peculiar people received him not."—*Norton*. The idea is sufficiently plain, according to either translation. The Jews had long been called the chosen people of God, *his own* in a peculiar sense. To them was this divine energy manifested, both in the works of creation and in the character and conduct of our Lord Jesus Christ ; yet they did not recognize the divinity ; in the language of another apostle, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened." Rom. i. 21. He says this of the Gentiles ; but, with a very slight modification, it was equally true of the Jews. The divine power, manifested by Jesus, they ascribed to Beelzebub, the fancied prince of evil ; and thus instead of receiving and glorifying it as the Holy Spirit, they blasphemed against it. See note on Matt. xii. 31, 32. Thus did the mass of the people reject the proffered blessing.

12, 13. *But as many as received him.* As many as acknowledged that the divine energy was displayed in the miracles, and consummate wisdom of Jesus, and in the glorious doctrines of his gospel. The fact is here recognized, that some did believe, that some did exercise faith, that some did receive this testimony of God, though the multitude rejected it. ¶ *To them gave he*

the sons of God, *even to them that believe on his name :*

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and

*power, &c.* "Whoever received the Word, the Life, the Light from on high, to him was given a sonship to God, in whom the word, life, and light centred, and from whom they radiated. By faith the good became his sons, not being such by Jewish descent, or by belonging to any particular race, or having any special birth, but by being born of God, born into that spiritual life, which constituted them true children of the Father of spirits."—*Litermore*. ¶ *Not of blood, &c.* "Literally, not of (particular) races ; αἷμα (αἷμα) being here used in the sense of race, as in Acts xvii. 26, and by profane writers. Blood in English is used in a similar sense ; as in the expression, 'They were of the same blood.' The meaning of the whole thirteenth verse is, that the blessings of the gospel were not confined to any particular race, as that of the Jews ; and that none received them on the ground of natural descent, as children of Abraham and the other patriarchs."—*Norton*. But perhaps the idea, intended to be conveyed by the evangelist, was simply that the *sonship* of which he was speaking, was not the result of natural generation, in any sense, but was purely spiritual. Of this spiritual or new birth, as it is familiarly termed, I shall speak further in another place.

14. *And the Word was made flesh.* Here is undoubtedly a direct reference to our Lord, and a declaration that the divine energy was imparted to him. It was by this that he was able to speak as none other had spoken, and to perform such miracles as none could perform without divine assistance. John i. 2 ; vii. 46, Campbell translates, "The word became incarnate ;" and adds :—"In the language of the synagogue, the term *sarx* (σάρξ,) was so often employed to denote a *human being*, that the evangelist's expression would not sound so harshly in the ears of those accustomed to that idiom as the literal version of the word does in

we beheld his glory, the glory as

ours." The phrase is rendered, *the Power of God became a man*, by Norton, who says, "The word *sarx*, (σάρξ,) in its primitive meaning *flesh*, is often used to denote *man*. When it is said that the Logos, or the Power of God, became a man, the meaning is that the Power of God was manifested in and exercised through a man. It is afterward, by a figurative use of language, identified with Christ, in whom it is conceived of as residing." If the last quoted remark imply that Jesus was an ordinary man, distinguished from others merely by an unusual share of divine wisdom and power, I would distinctly and emphatically record my dissent. For the rest, I concur in the opinion expressed in both notes; that the evangelist designed to announce the manifestation of the Word, that is, the divine energy, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The same energy which had been displayed in creating the world, and giving natural life to men, had now been manifested in Jesus Christ, being visible both in his language and conduct; it was so strongly impressed on his whole character, that, by a figure less bold than many which are common in the scriptures, he might be styled an incarnation of the divine energy. God imparted to Jesus that energy by which the world was made, so abundantly, that he became "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Heb. i. 3. It has been supposed, that the peculiar phraseology here used, *was made flesh*, or *became flesh*, was designed as a condemnation of an opinion, held by the Docetæ, that the body of Jesus was not literally flesh and blood, but imaginary. But, whatever may have been the original nature and dignity of the spirit which dwelt therein, it is plainly the doctrine of the scriptures that the body was composed, like ours, of material substance, literal flesh and blood. ¶ *And dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, &c.* That is, Jesus Christ, in whom resided this divine energy, dwelt on earth, and manifested the divine glory to men. The beloved John had been a chosen witness of such manifestations of glory, more than once. See Matt. xvii. 1-9; Mark v. 37-43. ¶ *Only begotten of the Father.* The word here rendered only begotten, is used five times by this

of the only begotten of the Father,)

apostle, and always with reference to the Lord Jesus. See ver. 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9. It has been supposed to signify figuratively, *well-beloved*, and not to indicate, according to its literal force, an only child. Yet, it must not be forgotten, that the same word is used by Luke three times, in all which its meaning is evidently literal, and it is universally understood to indicate an only child. Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38. The only other place, in which this word is found, is Heb. xi. 17; where it seems rather to denote a dearly beloved child, as Abraham had another at that time. If its meaning in the text be figurative, it is perfectly consistent with the many tokens of love and approbation openly manifested by the Father towards his Son. See Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 17. If it be used in its literal sense, then we may understand the apostle to describe Jesus, as the only person in human form, who was begotten by the direct and miraculous agency of the divine spirit; or that he was the only one, on whom was bestowed that peculiar sonship, by which he was called the Son of God. ¶ *Full of grace and truth.* It has been supposed that John here condemns another philosophic opinion, kindred to the foregoing; namely, that grace and truth were personal emanations from the *fulness of God*, or æons, that is, immortals. On the contrary, he asserts, that grace and truth, as well as energy, dwelt in Jesus, not as persons, or distinct beings, but as manifestations of the divine nature. The more plain interpretation by Barnes may be quite as correct. "The word *grace* means favors, gifts, tokens of beneficence. He was kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man's welfare by great sacrifices and love; so much so, that it might be said to be characteristic of him, or he *abounded* in favors to mankind. He was also *full of truth*. He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood. He was not like the false prophets and false Messiahs who were wholly impostors; nor was he like the emblems and shadows of the old dispensation, which were only types of the true; but he was true in all things. He represented things as they are, and thus became the *truth*, as well as the *way* and the *life*."

full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh

15. *John bare witness.* An appeal is here made to the testimony of John the Baptist, in proof that he did not claim to be the Messiah, in whom the divine energy, or the Word, was manifested, but voluntarily and openly yielded this greater honor to Jesus. ¶ *Of whom I spake.* That is, when first preaching in the wilderness of Judea. See Luke iii. 16. ¶ *He that cometh after me.* Not only was John born before Jesus, but he also commenced his public ministry before him. In the order of time, therefore, Jesus came after John; and this is the evident meaning of the phrase here. ¶ *Is preferred before me.* Is superior to me in dignity. Such was the constant testimony of John. He never claimed to be the Messiah, nor equal to the Messiah; but uniformly directed the attention of the people to him who was about to come in the name of the Lord, as a personage of higher dignity and greater authority than himself. Some have thought a priority of time was indicated here, with reference to the preëxistence of Jesus; but this is an unnatural meaning of the phrase, and, moreover, renders the next clause of this verse tautological. The former interpretation is considered altogether preferable. ¶ *For he was before me.* Some have interpreted this phrase as denoting preëminence in dignity, rather than priority of time. Thus Livermore: "That is, not in priority, but in preëminence; he was my chief, or principal. A similar phrase is used, Matt. xx. 27." The phrase referred to in Matthew can scarcely be called *similar*; to be sure, the word *prōtos* (πρώτος) occurs in both; and here the similarity may almost be said to end, for the construction of the two passages is materially different. Besides, the preëminence is sufficiently indicated in the preceding clause; and there is no evident necessity of supposing that the same idea is here repeated. I much prefer the common interpretation, which makes this declaration similar in its force to that recorded in John viii. 58. The existence of Jesus, previous to his appearance on the earth, is often referred to

after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

in the scriptures. See, for example, John iii. 13; viii. 58; xvi. 23; xvii. 5. Though he distinctly disclaims identity or equality with the Father, he just as distinctly asserts, that he was the Son of God in such a sense as no one else ever was, and that he existed with the Father in glory before his appearance on the earth. And it is most natural to suppose that this fact is referred to in the text. John acknowledges that while Jesus came after him, in the order of time, he was superior to him in dignity, and that he existed before him, to wit, in the bosom of the Father, or in the immediate enjoyment of his glorious presence.

16. *Of his fulness.* The fifteenth verse being parenthetical, this connects with the fourteenth; and the *fulness* relates to the fulness of *grace and truth* there ascribed to Jesus. The word *plērōma*, (πλήρωμα,) here translated *fulness*, was a term in common use among the Gnostics, to indicate the aggregate of the supposed emanations from God, and also their habitation. "All these emanations and the Deity himself were denominated æons, that is, immortals. They constituted the *pleroma* of the Gnostics, by which seems to have been meant, 'the perfect manifestation of the Deity.' The word was likewise used to denote the spiritual world inhabited by them, as distinguished from the material universe."—*Norton*. We may understand the apostle to mean, that the attributes of God were not separated, and caused to exist in different persons, so to speak, but that, by the indwelling divine energy communicated to Jesus, or by its incarnation in him, he became the depositary also of all those attributes necessary to the full accomplishment of his work. The idea is not dissimilar to that expressed in Col. i. 19, where it is declared that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" which is repeated in different terms in ii. 9: "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The same idea, substantially, is expressed in John iii. 34: "he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the

17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Fa-

ther, he hath declared him." ¶ *Have all we received, and grace for grace.* The meaning of this phrase is not very obvious, according to the common translation. Norton renders the concluding phrase, "even favor upon favor;" and many commentators express a similar opinion of the meaning; briefly, that we receive an *abundance* of grace through Jesus. The view taken by Campbell, differing somewhat from the former, seems to present a more full and exact delineation of the import of this passage. He renders it thus: "Of his fulness we have received, even grace for his grace," and adds: "In ver. 14, we are informed, that the word became incarnate, and sojourned amongst us, full of grace and truth. It is plain that ver. 15, containing the Baptist's declaration, must be understood as a parenthesis.—The evangelist, resuming the subject, which, for the sake of introducing John's testimony, he had interrupted, tells us that all we his disciples, particularly his apostles, have received of his *fulness*. But of what was he full? (It had been said expressly, that he was *full of grace*. When, therefore, the historian brings this additional clause concerning *grace* in explanation of the former, (for on all hands the conjunction *and* here admitted to be explanatory,) is it not manifestly his intention to inform us, that of every *grace* wherewith he was filled, his disciples received a share?—'The word incarnate,' says the apostle, 'resided amongst us, full of grace and truth; and of his fulness we all have received, even grace for his grace;' that is, of every grace or celestial gift, conferred above measure on him, his disciples have received a portion, according to their measure. If there should remain a doubt, whether this were the sense of the passage, the words immediately following seem calculated to remove it. 'For the law was given by Moses, the grace and the truth came by Jesus Christ.' Here the evangelist intimates that Jesus Christ was as truly the channel of divine grace to his disciples, as Moses had been of the

ther, he hath declared him.

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and declared knowledge of God's law to the Israelites."

17. *For the law was given by Moses.* That is, Moses was the minister of God, for the promulgation of that law, under which the Jews had lived for many generations. It is not intended that Moses was the author of that law, or that it was enacted by his authority; but only that it was communicated through him to the Jews by the supreme Lawgiver. ¶ *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* In like manner as the law was given through Moses, so were *the truth and the grace* manifested through Jesus Christ,—not as the original source of either, but as the being in whom they were embodied, and manifested to mankind.

18. *No man hath seen God at any time.* God is invisible to mortal eyes. He may be seen in his works, and known by the manifestations of himself which he makes either by ordinary or extraordinary means. He may communicate his will, as he did to the patriarchs and prophets. But *himself*, none can see. ¶ *The only begotten Son.* See note on ver. 14. ¶ *Which is in the bosom of the Father.* A figure, taken from the Eastern manner of reclining at table, indicating the most intimate friendship and agreement. See note on Matt. viii. 11. See also John xiii. 23—25. ¶ *He hath declared him.* Hath made him known; hath communicated his character and purposes. This he did, both by uttering the words which the Father had given him to speak; John vii. 16; xiv. 24; xvii. 8; confirming their truth "by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him; Acts ii. 22; and by exemplifying the purity and benevolence of the divine character in his own life. John xiv. 9—11; Heb. i. 3. Thus did he reveal to men both the will and character of the Father.

19. *This is the record of John.* Rather, this is the *testimony* of John; that is, of John the Baptist. See note on ver. 6. If there were any, as is somewhat probable, who believed John to be

nied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he

the Messiah, or who considered him a prophet and yet rejected Jesus, this appeal to his testimony must have had much weight on their minds. It was given publicly, and to those most interested in knowing the truth, and best qualified by their education to judge of the validity of its evidence. ¶ *When the Jews sent priests and Levites, &c.* The preaching of John in the wilderness produced a great sensation in Judea. His fame was widely extended, reaching even the ears of the principal ecclesiastical dignitaries at Jerusalem. As they were in daily expectation of the Messiah's appearance, it occurred to them that John might be the person so long and so anxiously expected. Accordingly they sent a deputation of priests and Levites, to question him on this point, and to ascertain, by a personal interview, whether or not he were the Messiah. See Matt iii. 1-6; Luke iii. 15. The other evangelists do not describe this interview so circumstantially as John. Much of the conversation is related by the others, not as a conversation, but as a general testimony to the assembled multitude. This evangelist, however, for the special purpose of satisfying John's disciples, not only that their master was not the Christ, but that he disclaimed the office when the priesthood intimated a willingness to acknowledge him in that character, records his testimony in the form of a conversation, as it actually occurred.

20. *He confessed, and denied not; but confessed, &c.* An idiomatic expression, denoting the most positive and unqualified assertion that he was not the Christ. In this was manifested the perfect sincerity and humility of John. By declining to answer the question, he might have enjoyed the high reputation of being the Messiah; for many so regarded him. But he would not, even by silence, give countenance to a falsehood, nor receive honor which did not rightfully belong to him.

21. *What then? Rather, Who then?* If thou art not the Christ, who art thou? ¶ *Art thou Elias?* That is, Elijah. Hebrew names, when trans-

saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give

planted into Greek, change the final *h* into *s*. See note on Matt. i. 2. ¶ *And he saith, I am not.* There is an apparent contradiction between John's reply and the declaration of our Lord, Matt. xi. 14. But, it should be remembered, that when Jesus said John was the Elijah that was to come, he referred to the prediction of Malachi, iv. 5, 6, and designed only to say that the prediction was fulfilled in John, inasmuch as he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Luke i. 17. The prophecy referred not to an individual, but to a character. A person bearing the distinctive marks of this character had appeared, and the prophecy was accomplished. But the Jews entertained the opinion that Elijah himself should return to the earth,—precisely the same individual who prophesied in the days of Ahab,—before the Messiah should appear. And when John confessed that he was not the Christ, they supposed he might be his precursor, and hence inquired if he were Elijah. He was bound to answer their question in the same sense in which it was proposed. And in this sense, he could not claim to be Elijah, without uttering a falsehood. Yet he assured them he was the precursor of the Messiah, ver. 23, who they supposed would be the prophet Elijah. His answer, then, while in terms it may seem contradictory to our Lord's declaration, in fact perfectly harmonizes with it; for he admits himself to be that very forerunner who was predicted by the prophets, coming in the spirit of Elijah, while he denies being the identical individual who formerly bore that name. ¶ *That prophet?* Or, the prophet. "To me it is evident, both from what is said here, and from other hints in the New Testament, that there was at that time a general expectation in the people, of some great prophet, beside Elijah, who was soon to appear, and who was well known by the emphatical appellation, *the prophet*, without any addition or description. In chap. vii. 40 41, *the prophet* is distinguished from the Messiah, as he is here from Elijah." —Campbell. See Matt. xvi. 14.

22, 23. The Jews, having been assured



an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, *I am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

that John was not the Messiah, nor literally Elijah or the other prophet, insisted that he should inform them who he was; that they might accurately report his character to the persons by whom they had been sent. In reply, he assured them that, although he was not the identical prophet Elijah, he sufficiently answered the description; for he came to announce the approach of the Lord, and to prepare his way, according to the prediction of Isaiah, xl. 3; an office which they supposed belonged to the Elijah spoken of by Malachi. They were thus informed that the Messiah was near at hand, as much so as if Elijah had personally appeared. ¶ *A voice of one crying, &c.* See note on Matt. iii. 3.

24. *Pharisees.* See note on Matt. iii. 7. The deputies from Jerusalem were Pharisees, and were probably sent by the Sanhedrin, which was composed chiefly of that sect. These were very punctilious in regard to rites and ceremonies, and desirous of knowing by what authority John had made so great a change in the rite of baptism, baptizing Jews as well as Gentiles. See notes on Matt. iii. 1, 6.

25. *Why baptizest thou?* This question probably implies more than is literally expressed. The simple act of baptizing was not unusual among the Jews, and need not have produced this excitement. But the baptism of John was not the "baptism of proselytism" to the Jewish religion, administered to Gentiles in token of their conversion to the faith of Moses; he baptized Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, as a token and seal of their admission into a new faith, which may perhaps not improperly be regarded as a medium of transition from Judaism to Christianity. It was

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not:

27 He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth

this change in the purpose of the rite, rather than the practice of the rite, which chiefly excited the attention of the Pharisees. They desired to know by what authority he made this innovation upon the established religion; why he converted the rite of baptism to this new purpose, and gathered around himself a new sect, if he were neither Christ, Elijah, nor that other prophet.

26, 27. *I baptize with water, &c.* John did not deny the fact, that he baptized and admitted disciples. Nor did he deny, that he had made an innovation upon the ancient form of faith. In regard to his authority for baptizing, his answer, though not direct, was sufficiently plain, and furnished full justification. He assured them, that the Messiah had come, though they had not yet recognized him; and that he was the herald of that illustrious personage, who was vastly superior to himself in dignity; thus leaving it to be inferred, that he baptized by the authority of Him who was now at hand. The other evangelists add the contrast, by which John illustrated the superior dignity and power of the Messiah, and intimated to the Jews that what had excited their attention was only the beginning of a still greater change in the affairs of religion. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke iii. 16. See notes on Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7, 8. The authority of the Messiah to make such change, they did not deny; nor did they deny his right to send a herald to prepare his way. The answer of John, therefore, may be regarded as proper, and sufficiently definite; and, so far as the record

Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which

taketh away the sin of the world.  
30 This is he of whom I said,

shows, it was satisfactory to them who proposed the question.

23. *Bethabara*. Most critics, on the authority of the best ancient manuscripts and versions, read *Bethany*, instead of *Bethabara*. There were two places in Judea called Bethany; one, on the slope of the Mount of Olives, and one, which is supposed to be here intended, on the borders of the Jordan. "There is ground to think that the change of *Bethany* into *Bethabara* took its rise from a conjecture of Origen, who, because its situation here does not suit what is said of Bethany where Lazarus and his sisters lived, changed it into Bethabara, the place mentioned, Judges vii. 24, where our translators have rendered it Beth-barah. But one thing is certain, that, in several instances, the same name was given to different places; and this *Bethany* seems here to be expressly distinguished from another of the name, by the addition, *upon the Jordan*. It adds also to the probability of the reading here adopted, that Bethany, by its etymology, signifies a place or house close by a ferry."—*Campbell*. ¶ *Jordan*. See note on Matt. iii. 5.

29. *Lamb of God*. The lamb has, in all ages, been an emblem of innocence; and the appellation is peculiarly appropriate to our blessed Lord, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled," Heb. vii. 26. But there can be little doubt that the phrase here used has a further allusion. The lamb, slain at the Passover, in commemoration of deliverance from Egyptian death and bondage, was always regarded as typical of our Lord; and it is worthy of notice, that he is described by the prophet as being "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," Isa. liii. 7; that he himself connected his own death with the paschal supper, selecting elements used on that occasion as tokens by which his disciples should commemorate his death, to the latest generations; and that he is styled "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. Moreover, he is even here called the Lamb of God, in connexion with the fact that he *taketh away the sin of the world*; in the accomplishment of which glorious work, it had been predicted that he should be

brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and his life was actually sacrificed. From all which circumstances, it seems proper to conclude, that the appellation *Lamb* is here not only descriptive of the mildness and innocence so manifest in the character of Jesus, but allusive to the prophetic declaration concerning his death. It may be doubted, however, whether the Baptist fully comprehended the meaning of that prophecy, which was so generally misunderstood by the Jews. Yet, whether or not he understood its purport, the prophecy itself was definite, and was fully accomplished in the person of Jesus. ¶ *Taketh away the sin of the world*. This was the great object of his mission. His name, given by divine appointment, had reference to the same fact: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. To save mankind from their sins, and to take away the sin of the world, are expressions which convey nearly the same idea; namely, a deliverance from sinfulness. The manner in which this should be accomplished is not here mentioned, and need not now be discussed. The nature and the extent of the salvation, which Jesus came to accomplish, chiefly demand attention. It is to be observed, that John does not say, "he taketh away the *punishment* which men deserve;" but he "taketh away the *sin* of the world." It would be comparatively a light and trivial blessing, to remit punishment and yet leave men in a state of sinfulness. But to eradicate evil from their hearts, to purify them from sin, to make them holy, to make them partakers of the divine nature and children of God in spirit,—this is a blessing worthy of him who imparts it, and deserving the everlasting gratitude of them who receive it. It is not like an opiate, which temporarily lulls pain, by stupifying the senses leaving the disease to rage with unabated fury; it is rather the healing balm, which cleanses, and purifies, and restores the diseased body to health. Let the disease be thoroughly eradicated, and the pain ceases, as a matter of course; but anything short of this is of little service, comparatively, for the pain will return,—perhaps with aggra-

After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come bap-

ivated violence. See note on Matt. i. 21. As to the extent of this salvation, it is represented as universal. *Of the world* is a very comprehensive term, and well corresponds with other phrases used in the scriptures, referring to the same subject. And it should be remarked, that, although *world* is sometimes used to denote *all*, and sometimes to denote the unbelieving and sinful, in contradistinction to Christians, it is *never* used to denote Christians or the more virtuous, in contradistinction to the unbelieving and ungodly. So that, whatever else the term may mean here, it *cannot* be understood to imply that the Lamb of God came to save the more virtuous, or to take away the sins of the faithful, leaving the more sinful and degraded to perish forever. Jesus constantly testified, while on earth, that he came to save sinners; to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and he gave no intimation that he would neglect to save them who most needed his aid. Paul understood the matter correctly, when he said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. i. 15. Believing that the same grace of God which had saved him would also be efficacious to the salvation of all sinners, and already enjoying the peculiar present salvation which is the result of faith and obedience, he declared his confidence and trust "in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10.

30, 31. *Of whom I said, &c.* See note on verse 15. The reference of John, however, is to his words in ver. 27. The remark is introduced by the evangelist, in ver. 15, out of its natural order in the conversation, and for a special purpose. In ver. 27, John announces the approach or presence of a superior, for whom he esteemed himself unworthy to perform even a menial office; in this place he points out Jesus, as the individual of whom he had before spoken. ¶ *I knew him not.* It

tizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he

may be thought singular, that John should have had no personal knowledge of Jesus, until they were more than thirty years of age, especially as they were relatives according to the flesh. But there is no evidence that they had any intercourse with each other, until they met in the wilderness on the banks of the Jordan. John's address to Jesus "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" may seem to indicate a previous acquaintance. But his language may have been prompted by some peculiar dignity in the appearance or demeanor of Jesus, instead of any personal knowledge of him. See note on Matt. iii. 14. The text, however, does not necessarily imply that they were strangers to each other's persons; but only that John did not know Jesus, in his true character, as the Messiah and the Lord whose way he was to prepare, until he witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit. ¶ *Made manifest to Israel.* That he should be discovered or made known to the Jews in a proper manner. "One intent of my publicly baptizing was, that he, coming to my baptism, should be shown to the Jews to be what he is, by some extraordinary sign from heaven."—Pearce. In this manner, as well as by his public proclamation of the Messiah's approach, did John prepare the way of the Lord, according to the prediction.

32. *Bare record.* Gave testimony; or, testified. ¶ *I saw the Spirit descending, &c.* This descent of the spirit, by which Jesus was identified as the Son of God, was immediately subsequent to the baptism of Jesus. Matt. iii. 16, 17; Mark i. 10, 11; Luke iii. 21, 22. John omits the baptism itself; but preserves an account of the more material fact, the descent of the spirit; and he tells us, more explicitly than the others, that it was designed as a public attestat on of his Messiahship;—to the Jews in general, as such a miraculous event was significant of divine regard and approbation; and to John in particular, as the fulfilment of a promise

that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

35 ¶ Again the next day after,

that he should witness this sign, and thus have absolute conviction in regard to the identity of him whom he should proclaim as the Messiah. Concerning this descent of the spirit, see note on Matt. iii. 16.

33. *The same said, &c.* The divine spirit, which moved John to go forth into the wilderness and proclaim the immediate approach of the Messiah, assured him that, when the person appointed to this office should approach for baptism, he should be publicly marked, or identified, by this sign. When Jesus approached, John seems to have had a strong impression that he was the person; and this may account for his hesitation, Matt. iii. 14. But he did not *know* the fact; it was not made infallibly certain to his mind, until he witnessed the appointed sign. This removed all cause for doubt, and he unhesitatingly proclaimed Jesus to the people as the Son of God. ¶ *Baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* See note on Matt. iii. 11.

34. *And I saw, &c.* The Baptist repeats the assertion, that he saw the sign appointed, and that he accordingly, and upon the authority of that sign, testified the Messiahship of Jesus. ¶ *Son of God.* See note on Matt. iii. 17.

35. *The next day after.* The evangelist narrates the events of four days, in this chapter. Having, with much energy and sublimity of language, described the incarnation of the Word, or the imparting of the divine energy to Jesus Christ, that God might be manifested through him to mankind, ver. 1—18, he introduces the testimony of John in reply to the Pharisees, ver. 19—28. In ver. 29—34, he records the public attestation of John to Jesus as the Messiah, which was offered on the *next day*, that is, the day succeeding his interview with the Pharisees from Jerusalem. He now comes to the third day, and, in ver. 35—42, records some of the

John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw

first results of John's testimony; and, in ver. 43—51, relates the events which occurred on the *day following*, namely, the fourth day in the series. ¶ *John stood.* Or, was standing. It would seem that he was apart from the multitude at this moment, as only two of his disciples are said to have been near him. ¶ *Two of his disciples.* The preaching of John convinced many that he was a prophet. They associated themselves with him as disciples. Some of them afterwards attached themselves to Jesus. But so long as John lived, several remained with him, and were called and known as *his* disciples. See Matt. xiv. 12. Traces of them are found many years afterwards. See Acts xix. 1—5. Of the *two disciples* here mentioned, one was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, ver. 40. Some have supposed the other was John, the writer of this gospel; this is only a conjecture, yet it is not improbable.

36. *Looking upon Jesus.* Fixing his eyes intently upon him, so that his disciples could not mistake his object. ¶ *The Lamb of God.* See note on ver. 29. Several appellatives are applied to Jesus, in this connexion, which seem to have been used by the speakers in a similar sense, and perhaps were regarded as nearly synonymous. Thus John calls him here Lamb of God; Andrew styles him Messiah, ver. 41; Philip describes him as the person predicted by Moses and the prophets, ver. 45, equivalent to *him that should come*, Luke vii. 19, 20; and Nathanael acknowledges him to be the Son of God, the King of Israel, ver. 49. All these appellations manifestly belong to the Messiah, and are similar, at least, in purport.

37. *Followed Jesus.* Several commentators explain this to mean *became his disciples*. And the phrase used, both in the original and in the translation, often has this metaphorical mean-

them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard

ing. But I think it should be understood here in its literal sense; as Jesus *walked*, ver. 36, the two disciples *followed him*, that is, walked after him, hoping to attract his attention and receive his instructions. Because, (1.) Men could scarcely be called *disciples* of Jesus, who never heard him speak, and had not even been invited by him to listen that they might learn. (2.) The same word occurs in the next verse, where it must certainly be understood in its literal sense; and there is no perceivable reason why it should not have the same sense in both verses.

33. *What seek ye?* This question was not proposed for the sake of information, for Jesus knew what was in man, and was able to discern the unuttered thoughts. Luke ix. 47; John ii. 25. Its design was, to give them opportunity to inquire concerning the truth. Their diffidence, and the awe they naturally felt in presence of such an illustrious personage, might otherwise have prevented them from addressing him. ¶ *Rabbi*. Master. See note on Matt. xxiii. 7, 8. ¶ *Where dwellest thou?* This question was not prompted by an idle curiosity, but by a desire to spend some time with him in conversation, that they might be instructed in his doctrine. It may be understood as an intimation, that they were unwilling to trouble him at that time, but would be glad to call at his abode when he might be at leisure.

39. *Come and see*. Our Lord did not interpose any obstacle to the accomplishment of the wishes expressed. He assumed no haughty airs, requiring them to wait his convenience. But he invited them to accompany him forthwith to his lodgings, that they might at once obtain the information they sought. The conversation which ensued is not recorded. But we must suppose it was

John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Ce-

satisfactory; for Andrew immediately sought his brother Peter, and announced his conviction that the Messiah had appeared. ¶ *Abode with him, &c.* That is, at his temporary lodging place. His usual residence had previously been at Nazareth, to which place he returned after his baptism and temptation; but he subsequently removed to Capernaum, which was thenceforth regarded as his home. ¶ *The tenth hour*. Four o'clock in the afternoon, or thereabouts. The Jews divided the day into twelve equal parts, called hours, commencing at sunrise and ending at sunset. Of course the length of each hour would depend on the length of the day, being longer in summer and shorter in winter. At the equinox, the Jewish hour would correspond with our measure of time, and their tenth hour would be exactly four o'clock in the afternoon; but in summer the tenth hour would correspond more nearly with five o'clock, and in winter, with three o'clock. For common purposes, however, the usual manner of reckoning is sufficiently exact.

40. *Andrew, Simon Peter*. See notes on Matt. iv. 18; x. 2.

41. *We have found the Messiah*. The Greek form of the Hebrew Messiah. Andrew and his associate had been told by John the Baptist, that this person was the Messiah; and by conversing with him, their faith in his Messiahship was confirmed. ¶ *Which is, being interpreted, the Christ*. As John wrote his gospel for the Grecians as well as the Jews, he frequently interpreted or translated the Hebrew words which he introduced, as here and in ver. 41. Christ is not so much the interpretation, as the synonym, of Messiah. They are the same name in different languages. They are both significant, and their meaning in English is *the anointed*. See note on Matt. i. 1.

phas; which is, by interpretation, a stone.

43 ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

42. *Brought him to Jesus.* He was not content that the faith of Peter should rest on any but the best evidence, and desired that he should personally listen to the instructions of the Master. Unaccountably it was also Peter's desire to have such an interview; for he was not accustomed to deprive himself of any advantage, through excessive modesty or lack of zeal. ¶ *Thou art Simon.* This may have been said to convince Simon that Jesus knew the names even of strangers, and thus had superhuman knowledge; or it may be understood merely as an introduction to the subsequent annunciation that his name should be changed,—thou art now called Simon, but henceforth thou shalt be called Cephas. ¶ *Son of Jona.* Or, of Jonas. See John xxi. 15—17. ¶ *Cephas.* A Syriac word, meaning a *rock* or *stone*. Peter, in the Greek, has the same signification. See note on Matt. xvi. 17. ¶ *Which is, by interpretation, a stone.* Rather, *Peter*. "We ought to consider that this evangelist wrote his Gospel in a Grecian city of Asia Minor, and for this reason was the more careful to translate into Greek the Hebrew or Chaldaic names, given for a special purpose, whereof they were expressive. There was the greater reason for doing so in the two cases occurring in this and the succeeding verse, as the Greek names were become familiar to the Asiatic converts, who were unacquainted with the oriental names. The sacred writer had a twofold view in it; first, to explain the import of the name; secondly, to prevent his readers from mistaking the persons spoken of. They all knew who, as well as what, was meant by *Christos*; but not by the Hebrew word *Messiah*. In like manner they knew who was called *Peter*, but might very readily mistake *Cephas* for some other person."—*Campbell*. In our translation, the word *Petros* is generally transplanted from the Greek, slightly changed in form; but, in this verse, the translators preferred, injudiciously I think, to give the signification of the name, rather than the name

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus

itself, and accordingly inserted, *a stone*.

43. *Galilee.* See note on Matt. ii. 22. ¶ *Findeth Philip.* See note on Matt. x. 3. "This does not refer to his calling these disciples to be *apostles*, for that took place at the sea of Tiberias. Matt. iv. 18. But it refers to their being convinced that he was the Christ. This is the object of this evangelist, to show how and when they were convinced of this. Matthew states the time and occasion in which they were called to be apostles; John, the time in which they first became acquainted with Jesus. There is, therefore, no contradiction."—*Barnes*.

44. *Bethsaida.* See note on Matt. xi. 21; xiv. 13. ¶ *The city of Andrew and Peter.* The place of their residence. Either Bethsaida was in the immediate vicinity of Capernaum, or these disciples subsequently removed to the last named place. See Matt. viii. 5, 14; Mark i. 21, 29; Luke iv. 31, 39.

45. *Nathanael.* See note on Matt. x. 3. ¶ *Him of whom Moses, &c.* A phrase equivalent to *him that should come*, Luke vii. 19, 20. It had been predicted that the Messiah *should come*, and this phrase, or *he that cometh*, was frequently used as descriptive of him. Philip was satisfied, though the manner of his instruction is not recorded, that Jesus was the person whose coming had been foretold by Moses and the prophets; or that he was the Messiah. This information he imparted to Nathanael, who in all sincerity was waiting also for the "consolation of Israel." ¶ *Moses in the law.* That is, in the first five books of the Old Testament, which still bear his name. No passage in particular was referred to; but we may well judge that Gen. xlix. 10, and Deut. xviii. 18, 19, were regarded as among the testimonies that the Messiah would come, in due time. ¶ *And the prophets.* The prophets who succeeded Moses had also borne testimony to the same glorious appearing. See Isa. ix. 6, 7; ch. liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Dan. ix. 24—27; Micah v. 2; Ma. iii. 1—3. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth.* He was thus

of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming

called, because, though born in Bethlehem, he had for many years lived in Nazareth. This place had a bad name, and the appellation of Nazarene was given to Jesus, by his enemies, as a term of obloquy and reproach. See note on Matt. ii. 23. This name, though not recorded in the scriptures as then applied to him, was in frequent use by the scoffers and ungodly in succeeding ages. But we are not to understand that Philip designed any reproach, in speaking of Jesus of Nazareth; he used the phrase simply to denote the individual and his residence. ¶ *Son of Joseph.* Such was the opinion then commonly entertained. Jesus was supposed to be the actual son of Joseph as well as of Mary. See Luke iii. 23. But, though this was generally believed by the Jews, and probably also by the apostles for a considerable time, it does not follow that such was the fact. They also believed, apostles as well as others, that he would live always in the flesh, that he would erect a temporal kingdom, that he would reign forever at Jerusalem, and subjugate the whole earth to the dominion of the Jewish nation; but he did none of these things. It is no more surprising that they should mistake his origin, than that they should mistake his character. Indeed it is less surprising; for they had more ample means to know the truth in the one case than in the other. The Holy Ghost was not communicated to them at the first; and, as a natural result, they remained ignorant of many things which were afterwards made known to them.

46. *Can any good thing, &c.* Nazareth, and indeed all Galilee, was regarded with contempt by the inhabitants of Judea. John vii. 52. They were unwilling to allow that anything good, much less that any true prophet of God, could come from Galilee. So universal and so strong was this prejudice, that even Nathanael, honest-hearted and guileless as he was, felt its influence; and he hesitated to believe the fact related by Philip, when he learned that

to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Be-

the supposed Messiah came from that despised province. Such improper prejudices against places and persons have not yet become extinct. They still exert an unhappy influence over the human mind. And we too frequently refuse to admit the rightful claims of an individual, through dislike of his residence, or to examine candidly and impartially an alleged truth, through dislike of the individual by whom it is promulgated. ¶ *Come and see.* A common Jewish phrase, meaning, make personal examination; satisfy yourself. It was a very proper reply to the question of Nathanael, and the readiest way to remove his doubts. Philip did not attempt to convince him, by argument, that a good thing might come out of Nazareth; but only desired him to see and hear Jesus, and then judge for himself what was right. The event justified his expectation of success.

47. *An Israelite indeed.* An Israelite by nature and in character, as well as in name. All were not true Israelites who were of the stock and name of Israel. Rom. ix. 6. Thus also there is a vast difference between a Christian indeed and a nominal Christian. Not all who profess the name of Christ are true Christians; much less, all who dwell in Christian lands, and are denominated by that general name. ¶ *In whom is no guile.* No dishonesty, deception, or hypocrisy. We are not to understand that Nathanael was free from sin, or from the natural imperfections of humanity; for our Lord does not say this. But he bears testimony to the honesty, integrity, and uprightness of Nathanael's character. He was guilty of no fraud, practised no deception, made no hypocritical pretensions.

48. *Whence knowest thou me?* This question should be understood in regard to the character, rather than to the person or name of Nathanael; for it does not appear that Jesus had yet uttered that name. But he had described the character, as if he had been acquainted with the individual, from his youth. This excited Nathanael's surprise, and

fore that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I

he very naturally inquired how Jesus attained this information, or acquired this knowledge of his character. ¶ *When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* It is evident from the narrative, that Nathanael supposed himself perfectly screened from human observation, when under the fig-tree. That his employment there was such as to afford a striking development of his true character, there can be no doubt; because Jesus appeals to this alone, in proof of the correctness of his delineation,—a proof, moreover, which was designed to be, and actually was, conclusive in the mind of Nathanael, that he had been seen and his character read by Jesus.

49, 50. The knowledge which Jesus manifested of his character and conduct convinced Nathanael that he was a true prophet, and he willingly acknowledged him as the Messiah, using two common phrases descriptive of him, *Son of God*, and *King of Israel*. He seems to have felt certain that the circumstance to which Jesus referred, could not be known, except by superhuman wisdom; and he frankly professed faith in him. ¶ *Greater things than these.* That is, more striking evidences of my Messiahship than are afforded by my knowing your character and seeing you under the fig-tree. This may refer to the miracles of Jesus, or the triumph of his gospel over the most violent opposition, or to that special manifestation of the divine approval, which is referred to in the next verse.

51. *Verily, verily.* In the original, *amen, amen.* The word means *verily, truly*, when used at the commencement of an address: at the end of a prayer, it has the force of *so be it*, or *so may it be*. This repetition of the word, or double form of its use, is peculiar to this evangelist. The others use it only in its simple form. ¶ *Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels, &c.* This cannot well be understood literally; as the

saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

descent of the spirit subsequent to his baptism had already taken place, and there is no record of any subsequent event in his life which so nearly corresponds with *the opening of the heavens*. "This is figuratively expressed, and seems to mean only this, that his disciples should be witnesses of a communication between him and heaven; as they were according to what is said in ch. xii. 28, and in Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35; 2 Pet. i. 17, 18."—*Pearce*. There is a manifest allusion to Gen. xxviii. 12. "The meaning of this passage seems to be no other than this:—'Because I said, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Did this seem to thee matter of such wonder? Thou shalt see greater things than these. For you shall observe such plenty, both of revelation and miracle, that it shall seem to you as if the heavens were opened, and the angels were ascending and descending, to bring with them all manner of revelation, authority, and power from God, to be imparted to the Son of man.' Where this also is included, namely, that angels must, in a more peculiar manner, administer unto him, as, in the vision of Jacob, the whole host of angels had been showed and promised to him, in the first setting out of his pilgrimage."—*Lightfoot*. Though such a figurative meaning, in all probability, belongs to this passage, it may nevertheless be remarked, that there was actually a ministration of angels with reference to our Lord, on many occasions; not always, however, in the sight of the disciples. The angels of God appeared to his virgin mother, Luke i. 26—33; announced his birth to the shepherds, and sang praises to God, Luke ii. 8—15; aided him at the close of his first temptation, Matt. iv. 11; strengthened him during his last temptation, or his trial in the garden, Luke xxii. 43; and were present at his resurrection, Matt. xxviii.



## CHAPTER II.

**A**ND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

2; John xx. 11—14. To this may be added the appearance of Moses and Elias, at the transfiguration; for though they were not literally angels who ministered on that occasion, they were the spirits of just men made perfect, and might be styled angels by a common Jewish usage. Matt. xvii. 1—8. These, with the audible testimony from heaven, may not improperly be regarded as answering to the language here used by our Lord.

## CHAPTER II.

1. *The third day.* By this phrase, some understand the third day after Jesus departed for Galilee, John i. 43; others suppose it means the third day of the wedding-feast. Thus Pearce transposes the sentence, "there was a marriage-feast, on the third day, in Cana, &c." The former interpretation is more common and obvious, and probably more correct. ¶ *Marriage.* Rather, marriage-feast. A marriage among the Jews was celebrated with much pomp and festivity. The feasting often continued for the space of seven days. See Judges xiv. 12, 17. ¶ *Cana of Galilee.* This was the residence of Nathanael, John xxi. 2. It was about sixteen miles north-west of Tiberias, and not far from the lake of that name, otherwise called the sea of Galilee; and was not more than six miles distant from Nazareth, where our Lord had been brought up. This portion of Galilee belonged to the tribe of Zebulun. There was another Cana belonging to the tribe of Asher, in the vicinity of Sidon. Dr. Clarke, in a description of the village, supposed to be the same which is mentioned in the text, observes, as quoted by Calmet,—"It is worthy of note, that, walking among the ruins of a church, we saw large massy stone pots, answering the description given of the ancient vessels of the country; not preserved or exhibited as reliques, but lying about disregarded by the present inhabitants, as antiquities with whose original use they were unacquainted. From their appearance, and the number of them, it

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

was quite evident that the practice of keeping water in large stone pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons, was once common in the country."—*Travels*, p. ii., ch. 14. The present name of this village is Kefer Kenna, or Cane Galil, and it contains about 300 inhabitants, principally Christians. It has been supposed, and not without some plausibility, that this feast was given at the marriage of a friend or perhaps a relative of Nathanael; and that for this reason his Master and the associate disciples were invited guests. ¶ *And the mother of Jesus was there.* From the construction of this and the following verse, it would seem that she was at the house of rejoicing before her son was invited. She may have been an intimate friend of the family, and possibly had a share in superintending the entertainment. See ver. 3. She did not usually accompany our Lord, while engaged in his mission; but on this occasion, she was present, and was permitted to witness his first recorded miracle. And there seems a peculiar propriety in the fact, that she who had by miracle been made the mother of our blessed Lord, and had for thirty long years cherished in her heart the communications of the heavenly messenger, and preserved a steadfast faith that her Son was appointed for a great and glorious work, should behold the earliest manifestation of his miraculous power.

2. *Jesus was called.* That is, invited. The word *call* was often used in this sense, in former times. ¶ *And his disciples.* Up to this time we have an account of only four, or at most five, disciples, who had attached themselves to Jesus; namely, Andrew, Peter, Nathanael, Philip, and probably the companion of Andrew, John i. 35—39, who is by very many supposed to have been John the evangelist; and if this supposition be true, and if all were now present, the historian here relates what he personally witnessed.

3. *When they wanted wine.* From this remark, and from what is said in ver. 10, it would seem that the mirac.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the ser-

subsequently recorded was not performed on the first day of the feast. It is by no means probable, that so small a quantity of wine would be provided at a Jewish wedding as might be exhausted in one day; for, according to the usual custom, the festivities were expected to continue for a week or more.

4. *Woman.* This form of address from a son to his mother, sounds strangely in our ears. Yet, formerly, it was not unusual. The same term is used in our Lord's address to his affectionate disciple, Mary Magdalene, after his resurrection, John xx. 15, and to his mother, when he hung on the cross, and was making provision for her future support and comfort, John xix. 26. ¶ *What have I to do with thee?* This also is a form of speech seldom used at present; and its import is not readily perceived. At first sight, it might seem to be a reproof of his mother's officiousness; as if he had said, I do not need your advice in this matter, but can manage my business without assistance. But there are many reasons why this should not be regarded as the true meaning. Without naming others, it may be sufficient to remark, (1.) that the mother of Jesus evidently did not regard his language as a reproof, ver. 5, for she believed he would comply with her request; and (2.) that it would be utterly inconsistent with his affectionate nature, and with his uniform precepts, to speak harshly to his mother. Some render the phrase, *what is that to me and thee?* and interpret it thus; it is no concern of ours, if the wine has failed; they who provided the feast should have procured a larger supply, and it is their business now to provide it. Others translate, *what hast thou to do with me?* and say "it was no doubt our Lord's intention, in these words, gently to suggest that, in what concerned his office, earthly parents had no authority over him. In other things, he had been subject to them."—*Campbell.* Either of these interpretations avoids the appearance of harshness. ¶ *Mine hour is not yet come.* We cannot understand this expression to indicate, that Jesus did not intend to per-

vants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the man-

form the miracle, because he immediately required the servants to provide water which he designed to transform into wine. Hammond supposes him to mean, that the *hour had not come*, when he should perform miracles *publicly*, as his mother might seem to expect; that this must be delayed, until he should go up to Jerusalem; but that he would supply what was lacking *privately*. Others understand him to mean, that the precise time for his interference had not arrived; that he would not perform a miracle while any of the wine remained; but that when it should be entirely exhausted, he would provide as much as should be necessary. Either of these interpretations is consistent with the facts in the case; for he did convert into wine so much water as was needed, and nevertheless did not perform the miracle publicly; it is expressly stated that the ruler of the feast "knew not whence it was," ver. 9; and there is no evidence that any did know except Jesus, his mother, his disciples, and the servants.

5. *His mother saith, &c.* Hence it appears that she did not regard the language of Jesus as a reproof to her, or as a refusal to exert his power; on the contrary, she expected he would perform the work which she had suggested, ver. 3.

6. *Six water-pots of stone.* Vessels, as some think, similar to what is now denominated stone-ware. It is perhaps quite as probable, that they were literally stones, excavated or hollowed out, like the mortars formerly used by the aborigines of this country, of which some specimens still exist. The vessels, mentioned in the note on ver. 1, would seem to be of this kind, rather than stone-ware. ¶ *Manner of the purifying of the Jews.* That is, agreeably to the Jewish custom, for the various washings and sprinklings required for legal cleansing or purification. See note on Matt. xv. 2. ¶ *Firkins.* The original signifies simply *measures*. Campbell supposes the Jewish *batn* to be the measure indicated, and so renders the word. He adds:—"It ought not to be dissembled, that, in most of

ner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was

the explanations which have been given of the passage, the quantity of liquor appears so great, as to reflect an improbability on the interpretation. I shall only say, that the English translation is more liable to the objection than the present version. The *firkin* contains nine gallons; the *bath* is commonly rated at seven and a half, some say but four and a half; in which case the amount of the whole, as represented here, is but half of what the English translation makes it. The quantity thus reduced will not, perhaps, be thought so enormous, when we consider, first, the length of time, commonly a week, spent in feasting on such occasions, (of which time, possibly, one half was not yet over,) and the great concourse of people which they were wont to assemble." It may be observed in addition, that the evangelist does not say that all the water was converted into wine; what was drawn out, and carried to the master of the feast, was pronounced to be wine; but, for aught which appears to the contrary, what remained in the vessels continued to be water. The same power was equal to either miracle; and the latter may be regarded as even more striking than the former, inasmuch as it indicated a continued exertion of divine power, and was less liable to any suspicion of fraud.

7. *Fill the water-pots with water.* The disciples, believing already that Jesus was a great prophet, probably the Messiah, naturally expected some display of power, and would notice carefully all these preparations. But they were not permitted to fill the vessels with water, lest some collusion should be suspected by others. The servants of the house were required to perform this office, that the fact might be established, if doubted or contradicted. ¶ To

made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

*the brim.* They were entirely filled with water. None therefore could suspect that the appearance of wine was given to the water, by mingling wine or any other liquid with it.

8. *Draw out now, &c.* This command appears to have been given immediately after the water was poured into the vessels. What they drew out was wine. The effect had been produced in an instant, by the exercise of divine power. See note on ver. 6. ¶ *Governor.* The master of ceremonies at the feast.

9. *Knew not whence it was.* Knew not where it was procured, or how it was provided. This is mentioned, to show that the governor or ruler of the feast was not influenced in his judgment concerning the quality of the wine, by any prepossession for or against Jesus, or by the fact that a miracle had been performed. It is added, that the *servants knew*, to show that the fact of the conversion of water into wine, and into such wine as to draw forth this encomium from the master of ceremonies, was within the absolute knowledge of disinterested persons, and capable of satisfactory proof.

10. *Every man, &c.* It is customary; men usually do so. ¶ *When men have well drunk.* This has been a favorite theme for scoffers, as if the meaning were, "when men have become intoxicated;" and they have represented that our Lord not only encouraged habits of intemperance, but provided additional means for drunkenness. That the original word here used sometimes indicates drinking even unto intoxication, is not denied; but such is not its necessary meaning, nor is this its meaning here. Campbell translates, "when the guests have drunk largely," and adds:—"The Greek word, frequently in scripture, and sometimes in other writings, de-

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

notes no more than to *drink freely*, but not to intoxication." The obvious meaning of the verse is this:—It is customary to offer the best wine at the commencement of the feast, and afterwards, when the taste has become somewhat blunted by a free use of wine for several days, to use wine of an inferior quality; but thou hast reserved the best until a late period in the feast. ¶ *That which is worse.* Of inferior quality. ¶ *Good wine.* The more palatable, the better flavored, as compared with the other.

11. *This beginning of miracles.* This is the first miracle of our Lord, of which we have any record. And it is worthy of remark, that this, as well as all which succeeded it, manifested a spirit of benevolence, and a desire to promote the happiness of men. He never exerted the divine power for the injury of any man; but he uniformly exhibited, in his works, the same benevolence which his words expressed. ¶ *Manifested forth his glory.* Exhibited his miraculous power; gave visible tokens of that divine energy which dwelt in him, by performing a work which none could perform without assistance from God. John iii. 2. ¶ *His disciples believed on him.* The miracle, while it manifested good will to the bridegroom and his guests, seems to have been wrought for the special benefit of the few persons who had already attached themselves to Jesus as disciples. They had been taught by John, that Jesus was the Lamb of God, or the Messiah, as they evidently understood the phrase. They had conversed with him, and their faith had received new strength. But for its full confirmation, it was necessary to receive this seal, the impress of divine power, exhibited in miracles. The result was, that their confidence in him was established; and during the remainder of his ministry, however much they may have mistaken his true character, they firmly believed he was the Messiah. Thus they associated with him, without hesitation, when called to be apostles, Matt. iv. 18–22, and x. 1–5; and were instructed in those glorious truths which they fearlessly proclaimed to the world, after they had been "endued with power from on high" Luke xxiv. 49. What effect

was produced on the servants, is not recorded.

The argument, sometimes drawn from our Saviour's conduct on this occasion, in favor of using intoxicating drinks, is utterly without foundation. (1.) In the first place, there is not the slightest evidence that he rendered the water intoxicating, by converting it into wine. The color and taste might be changed without any alteration in its other qualities; and thus it might remain harmless as before. The master of ceremonies made the remarks in ver. 10, "when he had tasted the water that was made wine," ver. 9; of course his remarks had reference only to those qualities which were discoverable by the sight and taste; there had not been time to experience any exhilarating effect, if it were capable of producing it. So that there is no evidence that this wine had any intoxicating quality. (2.) It is said that, by furnishing a miraculous supply, our Lord encouraged wine-drinking, and thus countenanced intemperance. However true might be this conclusion from the same premises, in the present day, and in this country, yet it should be remembered that the wine used, in the East, at the time mentioned in the text, was *the juice of the grape*, generally unfermented and not intoxicating. How different this, from the miserable trash which now passes under the name of wine! often containing not one particle of grape-juice, but wholly a mixture of vile and nauseous drugs with rum and water; and when grape-juice is used, it is enforced with alcohol, almost universally. The mildest wines found here are said to contain more than ten per cent. of alcohol; and many of them, more than fifty per cent. It is absurd to apply the same argument to these, and to the wine used at the marriage-feast attended by Jesus. He might encourage the drinking of the pure unfermented juice of the grape, without countenancing drunkenness. But not so in regard to the intoxicating mixtures now called wine. (3.) Even if it could be proved that the Eastern wine was intoxicating, it does not follow, that Jesus encouraged drunkenness, by converting a quantity of water into wine which would not intoxicate,

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples ; and they continued there not many days.

13 ¶ And the Jews' passover

and thus furnishing a harmless beverage to be used instead of one which was hurtful.

But, it may be said, he did not forbid the use of wine. He did, however, forbid drunkenness and debauchery. It was not his custom to oppose in detail the multiform vices of men. He announced and established the great fundamental principles of morality, and left it to the common sense of men to apply those rules to particular subjects. For example ; he did not particularly rebuke the sin of concealing one's property, and obtaining by perjury a legal discharge from debts, to the manifest injury of creditors ; but he did require men to be honest and *defraud not*, Mark x. 19 ; and this may apply to all forms of fraud. So, in this case. He testified against drunkenness. Matt. xxiv. 49 ; Luke xii. 45 ; xxi. 34. And this should be regarded as a prohibition of all practices which result in drunkenness. And, though the wines of the East might be used without such danger, yet what now bears the name of wine may not be used without manifest danger of intoxication and ultimate degradation and misery. The only safe course is to abstain entirely. Thus doing, we may expect to continue temperate. But if we tamper with the serpent, we ought not to be surprised when we feel its sting. On the whole, if any will insist on the propriety of drinking wine, on the authority of this miracle, let him be careful to procure precisely such an article as our Lord furnished ; namely, wine manufactured from water alone, without the admixture of any other substance ; such wine will do him no harm. But, as he values his health of body and peace of mind, let him abstain from all else which bears the name.

12. *To Capernaum.* This place became the principal residence of our Lord, during the remainder of his earthly life. See note on Matt. iv. 13. ¶ *Not many days.* Because he desired to attend the passover, at Jerusalem.

was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting :

13. *The Jews' passover, &c.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 2. ¶ *Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* This was the first passover which he attended, after the commencement of his ministry. It is generally supposed that he attended three others, namely, those mentioned in Luke vi. 1 ; John vi. 4 ; and that at which he suffered death. Matthew mentions only the last ; but he does not assert that Jesus did not attend others. If he was thus present at four passovers, the first being not long after he commenced preaching and the last coinciding with his death, his ministry must have somewhat exceeded three years in duration.

14. *And found in the temple, &c.* " This and all which follows, to ver. 23, seems not to belong to this place. This account seems to be of the same fact with that which the other evangelists mention, and place on the day (Monday in passion week) on which Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The reasons which incline me to think that this is the same fact, and is here told out of its proper place, are as follows. What Jesus here says in ver. 19, about destroying the temple, is what the two false witnesses testified, when Jesus was before the Jewish high priest, that he had said, Matt. xxvi. 60, 61. Now if the words had not been spoken, but at the distance of above three years before, as John here places them, it seems not likely that they would have been thought by the high priest to have had so much weight in them, as if they had been spoken but a few days before Jesus' trial. Besides, no other evangelist represents Jesus as having foretold that he was to rise from the dead, and that on the third day, till a short time before his crucifixion. See Matt. xvi. 21 ; xvii. 22 ; Luke ix. 22. — I have this one more reason to offer, namely, that in Luke xxiii. 5, Jesus is said to have taught throughout all Jewry beginning from Galilee to this place, that is, to Jerusalem ; from whence I gather, that what John has said here is wrongly placed,

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

this being, in John's gospel, the first instance of his teaching, and this being said here to have been at Jerusalem."—*Pearce*. Some other commentators adopt the same general view. But others understand that Jesus thus cleansed the temple twice; first, at the commencement of his ministry, and afterwards near its close; that the circumstances were similar, on the two occasions; and that it is no unusual thing for sinners, when induced to forsake their evil ways, as were these traffickers and money-changers, to return to their former sinfulness, in even a less space than three years. ¶ *Oxen*. Rather, cattle. Oxen were not used for sacrifice, according to the letter of the Jewish law. But these are supposed to have been kept for sale to those who wished to offer them in sacrifice. See note on Matt. xxi. 12.

15. *Scourge of small cords*. The original word rendered *cords* signifies *rushes* or *reeds*. Perhaps cords were made of that material. There is no evidence that Jesus used any violence towards the transgressors. His scourge or whip might have been assumed as an emblem of authority, and possibly used in driving out the cattle. But it is not probable, that any compulsory means were employed against the men who were profaning the temple by their ungodly traffic. See note on Matt. xxi. 12.

16. *House of merchandise*. It was unbecoming the sacred purposes to which the temple was dedicated, that merchants and brokers should congregate there, for the transaction of their business, even though their bargains were made in all honesty and fairness. But it would seem from Matthew's account, "Ye have made it a den of thieves," that dishonesty and fraud were practised in these pecuniary transactions. Probably, an exorbitant price

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.

18 ¶ Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

was demanded for the cattle which strangers from a distance desired to purchase for sacrifice; and unrighteous gains exacted in exchanging the foreign coin of strangers for the Jewish coin in which the offerings were required to be made, namely, a half-shekel for each male Jew who had attained the age of twenty-one years. Such dishonest traffic is criminal anywhere; especially, in the temple of God.

17. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*. "My zeal for thy house consumeth me."—*Campbell*. The scripture referred to is Ps. lxi. 9. The meaning is, that a fervent desire for God's glory was the pervading principle of our Lord's heart. To this he was ready to sacrifice even his life. He desired that a pure worship might be offered; that God might be revered, worshipped, trusted, loved, and feared with a godly fear. Hence he not only purified the temple, but labored for the purification of the human heart. As the glory of God was consistent with the highest happiness of his children, his Son labored, suffered, and died, for its advancement. No opposition or danger could induce him to relinquish his great object. He steadfastly persevered, being sustained by an unquenchable and all-engrossing zeal, and strengthened by the divine energy.

18. *What sign, &c.* The Jews allowed that a prophet of God might lawfully reform or change the customs established in the temple. As Jesus thus assumed the authority of a prophet, they demanded a sign, or miracle, in proof of his divine appointment. See note on Matt. xxi. 23.

19. *Destroy this temple, &c.* This, as is evident from ver. 21, is a distinct, though figurative, allusion to the death and resurrection of our Lord. This was the only sign from heaven which he would promise. It is substantially the

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen

same with that spoken of, Matt. xii. 38—40, where it is styled the "sign of the prophet Jonas." It was not unusual to denote the human body by the word temple. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16. Perhaps our Lord used this figure the more readily, as the demand of a sign was occasioned by his purifying the literal temple.

20. *Forty and six years, &c.* The Jews understood Jesus to speak of the literal temple, and hence their reply. It is said that Herod the Great commenced a thorough repair of the temple, what indeed might without much impropriety be called its reedification, in the eighteenth year of his reign, or sixteen years before the birth of Jesus. And although the main body of the temple was completed in somewhat less than ten years, yet the work of ornamenting and embellishing still went on, and was not completed, even forty-six years after the commencement, when Jesus commenced preaching at the age of thirty years. ¶ *Wilt thou rear it up in three days?* Understanding our Lord literally, the Jews might well manifest surprise, that he should profess ability to perform, in three days, what the labor of many persons, for the space of forty-six years, had scarcely been able to accomplish. And, truly, it would be no less a miracle than the resurrection of the dead. But his meaning, as it was subsequently made known to his disciples, is distinctly announced in verse 21.

22. *His disciples remembered, &c.* It does not appear that they understood his meaning while he lived. Indeed, the contrary is evident. For it is repeatedly declared that they understood not his language concerning the resurrection; and their conduct, before he was raised, affords sufficient evidence that they expected no such event. But, after his resurrection, they remembered his predictions and understood their import. Then these words concerning *the temple of his body* recurred to their minds, and the fulfilment of what was

from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast-

spoken was manifest. ¶ *Believed the scripture.* Rather, understood; so that they could exercise an intelligent faith. Undoubtedly, they had a general faith in the Old Testament, here called the scripture, before these words were uttered by their Master. But they *understood not* the true import of such passages as predicted the death and resurrection of the Messiah, until the events had actually occurred. See Ps. ii. 7; xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27—32; xiii. 33—37. Though the word, in the original, means simply *to believe*, or *to exercise faith*, yet it manifestly refers here to an understanding faith; not only a belief in the truth of the prediction, but a distinct perception of its meaning. ¶ *And the word which Jesus had said.* The same remarks apply here. They believed, at the first, that the word of Jesus was true; but did not understand his meaning, until he was raised from the dead.

23. *When he was in Jerusalem.* Here, it is supposed by Pearce and others, the narrative should unite with ver. 13; the intermediate verses being misplaced, and belonging to the last passover instead of the first which our Lord attended. See note on ver. 14. ¶ *At the passover, in the feast-day.* The word here rendered *feast-day* is by some translated *feast*; though the sense is not thereby changed, because the term indicates the time, not the provisions, of a feast. There is an appearance of tautology in the phrase, whichever way translated; for *the passover*, and *the feast* seem to indicate precisely the same thing; *feast of the passover* would express the whole idea, as it is generally understood. But I would suggest whether a special day of this feast may not be denoted by the *feast* or the *feast-day*, in the text. It is known that the paschal festival continued for seven or eight days. The ceremonies observed on the different days varied somewhat. On the first day was a holy convocation, and another on the seventh; Numb. xxviii. 16—25. Per-

day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any

haps one of these two days may be here intended, called emphatically the *feast day*. In John vii. 37, one day, namely, the last day, of the feast of tabernacles, is thus distinguished as the "great day of the feast." If, as is not improbable, a like distinction prevailed as to the days of the paschal feast, then the text may be understood to indicate the great day of this feast also. On this day, an unusually large concourse of people being present, Jesus may have more distinctly manifested his divine energy, by performing miracles in their sight. ¶ *Miracles which he did*. These miracles are not particularly described. The fact only is mentioned, that such were performed, and that the evidence thus afforded was sufficient to convince many that Jesus was divinely commissioned. However much the evidence of miracles may be decried by some, in the present day, it was regarded by the apostles as the most satisfactory which could be offered; and was appealed to by our Lord himself as conclusive, in proof that the Father had sent him. John v. 36; x. 36—38. Such was the evidence which he exhibited on this occasion; and it wrought faith in many of the witnesses.

24, 25. *Jesus did not commit himself unto them*. The word rendered *commit* is the same which is translated *believed*, in ver. 23. The meaning is, he did not *confide* in them; he did not *trust* in them. And the reason is given; he knew what was in their hearts, and would not place himself in their power. At this moment of excitement, believing the long-expected Messiah had come, they would probably have committed some indiscretion, or act of open mutiny or rebellion against the Roman government, had he allowed it, or given countenance to such extravagance, by openly avowing himself as the Messiah. Perhaps they would have "taken him by force, to make him a king," as others afterwards attempted. John vi. 15. He was willing they should believe, or the evidence of his miracles; but he

should testify of man. for he knew what was in man.

### CHAPTER III.

**T**HERE was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

was not willing, by any direct assurance, to furnish any pretext for resistance to the lawful authority of the government. Thus, on many occasions, he strictly prohibited his disciples from announcing his Messiahship, during his life-time. Matt. xvi. 20; xvii. 9. His apostles were under his eye continually, and he could restrain them from any impropriety. But he knew, if he were generally known to be the Messiah, popular outbreaks and commotions among the Jews would be unavoidable. The fact could not safely be announced, therefore, until after his death. Then his true character might be appreciated, and men might understand, what they *would not* now understand, that his reign was altogether spiritual. This fact may account for the otherwise seeming incongruity between his constant exhibition of evidence that he was the Messiah, and his prohibition to his disciples to speak of him as such, as long as he lived on earth. Some interpret this passage to mean, that Jesus did not commit himself to the people, knowing their fickleness, and that they might be turned against him, and induced to destroy him before he had fulfilled his ministry; but the former interpretation seems preferable. ¶ *He knew what was in man*. A clear declaration that he was inspired with divine wisdom; for human wisdom cannot accurately discern the secrets of the heart.

### CHAPTER III.

1. *A man of the Pharisees*. More briefly, a Pharisee. See note on Matt. iii. 7. ¶ *Nicodemus*. The same person is mentioned, John vii. 50, and xix. 39, as defending our Lord, in the Sanhedrim when others were speaking against him, and as assisting to embalm his body, after his crucifixion. He seems to have been a timid man, not daring publicly to avow his faith. His visit to Jesus was under cover of darkness, ver. 2; when he ventured to speak a word in his defence before the Sanhedrim, he was instantaneously silenced



2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher

come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

by expressions of dissatisfaction from others. He had not moral courage to contend boldly for the truth ; he loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, and was not willing to sacrifice his standing as a member of the highest ecclesiastical tribunal, by an open confession of the truth. His assistance in embalming the body would indicate, however, that timidity, rather than greediness of honor, was the principal cause of his concealment of faith. And in this view, it is perhaps unjust to his memory, that his name should be applied to that numerous class who now listen in secret and conceal their faith, from an undue fondness for popularity. He should rather be pitied for his constitutional timidity, than condemned for deliberate hypocrisy. ¶ *Ruler of the Jews.* This phrase seems here to indicate a member of the Sanhedrim. Compare John vii. 45—53.

2. *The same came to Jesus by night.* He already had knowledge of the miracles which Jesus performed, and was satisfied that he was divinely commissioned and assisted ; but he desired, by a private conference, to learn more particularly what were his character and doctrines. In this, he manifested a disposition worthy of imitation. It too frequently happens, that men condemn a doctrine without examination, and remain in darkness, because they will not come to the light and obtain the knowledge which would be readily imparted, on inquiry. And others embrace, or imagine they embrace, a doctrine, while they are ignorant even of its first principles. Such persons are easily carried about by every wind of doctrine. Firmness and assurance of faith cannot be expected under such circumstances. It is only by investigating the principles and evidences of a doctrine, that one can become firmly rooted and grounded in faith. This course Nicodemus was desirous to pursue, and hence he visited our Lord. His object, it would seem, was attained ; for though he had not courage to make public avowal of his faith, it is evident he cherished it in his heart. And he manifested his gratitude to Jesus, as a religious teacher, by assenting to render to his body those tokens

of respect, which his chosen apostles neglected to do. That he visited Jesus *by night*, or under cover of darkness, was probably the effect of his timidity. If any sin received more pointed and severe rebuke than any other from our Lord's lips, that sin was hypocrisy. See Matt. ch. xxiii. And if he had detected this in Nicodemus, (and he knew what was in man, John ii. 25,) if he had seen that this Pharisee concealed his faith through an overweening love of popularity, we may be certain he would have administered a just rebuke. But he did no such thing. He received Nicodemus as an honest inquirer, and instructed him in the things which belonged to his peace. ¶ *Rabbi.* See note on Matt. xxiii. 7. This word means *master*, or *teacher*, and was the common appellation of religious instructors. It was used by Nicodemus as a respectful salutation to one whom he immediately acknowledged as a superior teacher. ¶ *We know.* Some suppose that, by using the plural form, he meant to be understood that some of his associates entertained the same opinion which he expressed ; others, that his meaning was, it is commonly acknowledged. But this plural form is sometimes used for the singular, and it need not be otherwise understood here. I regard it as an acknowledgment of a single man's faith. In one sense, however, he may be understood to speak for others, and this may be the true import of his language ;—I confess that thou art a teacher from God, because we know, that is, it is undeniable, all must confess, that no one can perform such miracles without divine aid. Thus understood, the profession of faith was individual, but the reason on which it was founded, general. ¶ *Teacher come from God.* It does not distinctly appear, from this address, whether Nicodemus then believed Jesus to be the Messiah ; because the same language might be applied to a prophet of God. But he admitted his divine mission, and sought instruction concerning its character, and the doctrines which he taught. ¶ *These miracles.* The miracles here referred to are not particularly specified. But they were doubtless the same men-

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

tioned John ii. 23, which had already convinced *many*, besides Nicodemus, that Jesus was endued with power from on high. ¶ *Except God be with him.* This implies that both the aid and the approval of God are indicated by such miraculous works. The argument thus furnished of the divine approval is forcibly stated in John ix. 30—33. That the divine energy was manifested in such miracles, is equally manifest. They were evidently beyond the reach of human power; and even if the existence of superior malevolent beings were admitted, such works were inconsistent with their character and not to be attributed to their power, because the works bore the uneffaceable impress of kindness and benevolence. To such works our Lord uniformly and confidently appealed, in proof that he came from God, to do the will of God; and that God aided him in its accomplishment, by his own energy.

3. *Except a man be born again.* The word rendered *again* sometimes means *from above*, and some have so understood it here; but the reply of Nicodemus manifestly shows that he understood Jesus to speak of a second or another birth. The phrase *to be born again* was in common use among the Jews, and well understood to mean proselytism from one religion to another. When a Gentile renounced idolatry and embraced Judaism, they said he was *born again*. "The Jews acknowledged, in order to proselytism, some kind of regeneration or new birth absolutely necessary; but then this was very slightly and easily attainable. 'If any one become a proselyte, he is like a child new born.'"—*Lightfoot*. The Jews "say of Abraham, when he renounced idolatry and was chosen by God, 'He was made a new creature.'—The later Jews express themselves as follows: 'He who repents must become like a new born child.'"—*Schoettgen*. ¶ *He cannot see.* He cannot perceive the true character, or cannot enjoy. The meaning is similar to *he cannot enter*, ver. 5, where the phrase is more fully explained. ¶ *Kingdom of God.* See note on Matt. iii. 2. It has been supposed by some, that Jesus here referred to a state of endless holiness and happiness in the future life, familiarly termed *heaven*.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

But his own language, in ver. 12, if there were no other proof, is sufficient to demonstrate the fact, that he referred to a state of things on earth. That *this* reference was to what he so often calls the *kingdom of heaven*, namely, the privileges and benefits resulting from the Messiah's reign on earth, is so evident that many of the most sound and eminent critics do not scruple to admit it. For example:—The kingdom of God does not here mean "that eternal life for which we are laboring, but the church over which God reigns."—*Beza*. "See the kingdom of God: which thing is, to be assembled and incorporate into the church of God."—*Geneva Bible*. "He cannot be ingrafted nor united to the church of God."—*Diodati*. "See the kingdom of God: that is, he admitted into it, and become one of my disciples."—*Pearce*. "Christ seems to speak this not primarily of that heavenly kingdom into which the blessed shall enter at the day of judgment, but of that spiritual kingdom which was to be erected by the Messiah. — The question betwixt Christ and Nicodemus was about that which was requisite to fit a man to enter the kingdom, that is, the church of God, and make him a partaker of the blessings of the gospel."—*Whitby*. "That the 'kingdom of God,' or 'of heaven,' are terms convertible in the evangelist, is obvious to every one that will take the pains to compare them; and that by the 'kingdom of God,' or 'of heaven,' is meant 'the kingdom and times of the Messiah,' is so plain that it needs no argument to prove it. When, therefore, there was so vehement and universal an expectation of the coming and reign of the Messiah amongst the Jews, and when some token and indication of these times might appear to Nicodemus, in the miracles that Christ had wrought, our Saviour instructs him by what way and means he may be made apt and capable for seeing and entering into this kingdom, and enjoying the benefits and advantages of Messiah's days."—*Lightfoot*. To the same purpose, substantially, Hammond, Gilpin, and others.

I have dwelt the longer on this subject, because it is now so generally misunderstood, notwithstanding the correct expositions by the principal comment

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

tors. The meaning may be briefly expressed thus: In order to become members of my kingdom on earth, or to become disciples, it is necessary to renounce former errors of opinion and evil practices, and to adopt and practise the principles of truth and righteousness which I teach: this change is as necessary for Jews as for Gentiles; the Jews are by no means prepared for the enjoyment of my kingdom; but they need a change similar to that which they denominate a *new birth* in Gentiles who forsake idolatry and embrace the law of Moses. This passage is nearly identical in meaning with Matt. xviii. 3, and the figure employed is of a kindred character. See the note on that place, and on Matt. xix. 14.

4. In this verse Nicodemus expresses surprise at our Lord's declaration, and inability to understand it. His surprise, however, was not occasioned by anything mysterious or even unusual in the language employed, but by its application to the Jews, as if they needed such a *new birth*. He could conceive of no possible reason why this could be necessary; for he supposed the Jews were already fit for enjoying the blessings of the Messiah's reign. It had never occurred to him, that they must be converted or proselytized from Judaism, in order to enter the Messiah's kingdom. And to express his utter surprise, he inquired how the language of Jesus could be literally true,—not because he was ignorant of its usual figurative meaning, but because he could imagine no proper application of that meaning to the Jews. "It may seem remarkable that Nicodemus understood our Saviour literally, when the expression *to be born again* was in common use among the Jews, to denote a change from Gentilism to Judaism by becoming a proselyte, by *baptism*. The word with them meant a change from the state of a heathen to that of a Jew. But they never used it as applicable to a Jew, because they supposed that by his birth he was entitled to all the privileges of the people of God."—Burnes.

5. *Except a man be born of water,*

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

and of the Spirit, &c. "That is, not only of water, (Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5; Heb. x. 22;) but of the Holy Spirit. This is what John the Baptist called a being *baptized with the Holy Ghost*, Matt. iii. 11. And it is called a birth here agreeably to the opinions of the Jews, who were used to call baptism, attended with a change of heart, a new birth."—Pearce. The Jews had been accustomed to receive proselytes from the Gentiles by *baptism* as a pledge or seal of their new faith. In like manner John baptized his disciples; and Jesus adopted the same rite, as a token of admission into his kingdom or church. See notes on Matt. iii. 6; xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16. To such a baptism our Lord probably alludes here, namely, a baptism with water; indicating that it was as necessary for a Jew to be baptized with water, on entering the Christian church, as for a Gentile, on entering the Jewish church. But this alone was not enough. Baptism with water was an expressive sign; but it was only a sign. It was profitable, not merely as "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." 1 Pet. iii. 21. In addition to this outward sign, that inward change was necessary, that change of belief, of desire, of purpose, which, when wrought in a Gentile, the Jews called a new birth. They must renounce all former errors and iniquity, and embrace the truth, and be guided by it in all their actions, if they would be true disciples. As this was a spiritual change, it might properly be called baptism by the spirit. God is the source of light and holiness. And through whatever causes he may operate, the effect produced in enlightening and reforming men may be justly regarded as the work of his spirit. The general idea conveyed in this verse seems to be this: Those who would be my disciples must not only be baptized with water, as a visible token of conversion, but they must also honestly embrace those spiritual truths communicated by me, which will purify their hearts from sin and reform their con-

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it

duct ; for they who are the sons of God are led by his spirit ; none other are worthy of the name. Rom. viii. 14. This general truth was here applied especially to the Jews ; for the difficulty in the mind of Nicodemus had exclusive relation to them. He could easily understand why Gentiles must be born again,—of water, and of the spirit, —but he could not conceive what need the Jews had of this new birth ; and it was to remove his ignorance or doubts, that these words were designed. "That by *water* is here meant *baptism*, I make no doubt ; nor do I much less question but our Saviour goes on from thence to the second article of evangelical doctrine. And as he had taught, that, towards the participation of the benefits to be had by the Messiah, it is of little or no value for a man to be born of the seed of Abraham, or to be originally an Israelite, unless he was also born from above ; so he now further teacheth him, that this admission is not to be obtained, but by an absolute renunciation of Judaism, and being baptized into the profession of the gospel. For the tenor of Christian baptism runs point blank against Judaism. The Jewish religion taught justification by works ; but evangelical baptism obliged to repentance, and alarmed the sinner to look elsewhere for remission of sins ; so that, to a Jew, baptism was indispensably necessary, in order to his admission into the kingdom of the Messiah, that, by that baptism of his, he might wholly divest himself of his Jewish state."—*Lightfoot*.

6. *That which is born of the flesh, &c.* Our Lord seems here to have special reference to the question of Nicodemus, in ver. 4, and to intimate that such a *literal* new birth, even if possible, would be unavailing ; inasmuch as the same fleshly lusts and passions would predominate ; the same erroneous opinions and practices would prevail ; it would not change the moral condition, in the least ; and therefore its subject would be no better prepared for his

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said

kingdom. The change, which was actually necessary, was a spiritual change ; and it must be wrought by the agency of the spirit, enlightening the mind, and purifying the heart, and bringing the whole man into conformity to that law of righteousness, which was the law of his kingdom.

7. *Marvel not, &c.* Do not wonder, therefore, at my declaration that a new birth is necessary. For as conversion from heathenism to Judaism is so great, and involves such a change of opinion and practice that you properly denominate it a new birth, so may the same term be applied to conversion from Judaism to Christianity, in which the change of opinion and practice is even greater. Men are thus brought under the influence of far more pure principles,—principles affecting the heart as well as the conduct, and resulting in a more perfect righteousness than the law can produce. You Pharisees claim to be the most exact observers of the law, and to have attained the full measure of righteousness which it requires or enables men to possess. And yet the principles of my kingdom are so much more pure, and its requisitions so much more spiritual and far-reaching, that no one can enter it, or become a worthy disciple, unless he shall attain a more pure and perfect righteousness than yours. See note on Matt. v. 20. Since so great a change is necessary, you need not wonder that I call it a new birth, when you use the same term to indicate a less important change.

8. *The wind bloweth, &c.* In this verse, Jesus illustrates the fact, that spiritual influences are none the less real because they are invisible. The wind blows ; and though no man can tell at what particular point the motion of the air commences or ceases, from what precise place the wind comes or to what region it goes, neither can see it as it passes, yet its effects are so perfectly discernible that none can deny its existence. It is heard, as it rushes by ; and trees and edifices are overturned by

unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

its furious blast;—or, by its milder progress, the fields of grass and grain are seen gracefully waving, and we feel its refreshing and invigorating breath upon our cheeks. So he who is born of the spirit, or whose heart is brought under the spiritual influence of the gospel, is changed in his character by an invisible agent. We see not the agent; we may not know the manner in which it operates; but we see the effects, we witness the change; and it is idle to deny the fact or the cause of it. Thus it was in the early age of the gospel. When Gentiles, or even Jews, were brought under the influence of its spiritual precepts, their natures were not indeed changed; they remained the same persons, subject to the same infirmities and passions; but their characters were changed, their opinions were corrected, their perception of duty became more distinct, their obligation to practice righteousness was more fully realized, and their conduct more closely corresponded with the infallible rule of right; thus they became new men, according to a figure of speech which is in use even at this day. And such is the operation of the same spirit now, and such its effects. And when we witness such a manifest change in the character and conduct of men now, we call them *new men*. And we are perfectly well understood, when we thus speak, to mean, not that they have been literally recreated, but that their actions are governed by new and more pure principles than before.

9. *How can these things be?* Some understand Nicodemus to inquire *how* the spirit produces such effects as Jesus had described. But this interpretation does not well harmonize with the reply of Jesus; because this was a matter which neither Nicodemus nor any other man was able fully to comprehend. The point of his question seems to be this: how is it possible that the children of Abraham, and those who are already obedient to the law of Moses, need a new birth, to fit them for the Messiah's kingdom? How can they be born again?

10. *Art thou a master of Israel, &c.*

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Rather, a *teacher* of Israel. The Sanhedrim was regarded as the fountain of religious knowledge, so to speak, from whence flowed the streams of life. Its members were called teachers, by way of eminence, as they were professedly selected from the most wise and learned men of the nation. On all points of doctrine and religious practice or ceremony, this was the court of final resort. Of course, they were expected, by diligent application, to have attained a thorough knowledge of the law and its requisitions, and to have become familiar with all the terms in common use, respecting the ecclesiastical institution. Campbell notices the fact, that, by the use of the article in the original, emphasis is given to the appellation *teacher*. He says, "The article here is remarkable; the more so, because there does not appear to be a single Greek copy which omits it. As a member of the Sanhedrim, Nicodemus had a superintendency in what concerned religious instruction, and might, on that account have been called a *teacher of Israel* but it is probably to intimate to us a distinguished fame for abilities in this respect, that he is styled, by way of eminence, *the teacher*." Any ignorance on his part was so much the more remarkable. ¶ *Knowest not these things?* Jesus expressed astonishment, or at least represented it as a surprising fact that such a man, a man who should be perfectly acquainted with the matter, did not understand what he meant by the new birth, or could not conceive how the Jews could be born again. "To which Jesus answered, 'I his that I say of new birth in baptism, being not only agreeable to, but perfectly a piece of your doctrine about proselytes, it is strange that thou, being a learned Jew, a Pharisee, and a master in Israel, shouldst not understand it. See Matt. iii. 2; John xiii. 10.'—Hammond.

11. *We speak that we do know, &c.* The plural is here used for the singular. Some understand Jesus to speak in the name of "himself and those who were engaged with him in preaching the gospel." This interpretation would be admissible at a later period of his min-

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how

istry; but at this time, it does not appear that he had commissioned any to speak in his name, or that any except himself was engaged in preaching the gospel. It is more natural, therefore, to suppose he used the plural number instead of the singular, referring to himself alone. He then affirms the truth of his testimony from his own personal knowledge. He knew that the Jews must be born again, that is, converted from their errors and sinfulness, before they could be his worthy disciples and enjoy the privileges and blessings of his kingdom. This absolute knowledge he opposes to the doubts and professed ignorance of Nicodemus. When one party actually knows a fact, and the other professes to be ignorant, it is no longer a question where the truth is to be found. And it is worthy of remark, that, not only at this time, but at all times, our Lord taught what he *knew* to be true. He did not speculate, he did not deal in probabilities, or, to use a homely phrase, he did not guess, concerning the doctrines he taught; but he boldly and firmly testified, in the name of God, what he knew to be true. We may therefore rely on his testimony in all cases, with the most implicit confidence. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God." 2 Cor. i. 20. ¶ *Ye receive not our witness.* Or, testimony. Jesus knew he had spoken the truth. He had given evidence, whose authority even Nicodemus acknowledged to be irresistible, that he was a teacher from God, and a messenger of truth, ver. 2, by the miracles which he wrought. And yet Nicodemus and his associates, the ecclesiastical rulers and religious teachers, believed not his testimony; some, on pretence that it was contrary to Moses, and some, as in this case, because they did not see the necessity of what he required. Many professed Christians are guilty of the same fault,—doubting the testimony of Jesus, because they have not skill to see its reasonableness.

12. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, &c.* The conversation thus far had reference to transactions on earth, namely, to the kind of preparation necessary for admission to the kingdom of heaven established on

shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

earth; or, in other words, to the preparation by which men became qualified for discipleship. "Your not believing or understanding, ver. 9, those things that are ordinary in the Jewish law, is an argument that things of a higher nature will not be received by you."—*Hammond.* The figure used by our Lord was perfectly familiar to Nicodemus. He knew what was meant by being *born again*, when applied to a proselyte from the Gentiles. But he could not conceive any necessity that the Jews should become proselytes from Judaism to some other doctrine, or how they could be born again, in any proper sense of the word. In this verse, Jesus refers to the still greater difficulty he would encounter in understanding or believing the spiritual doctrines, or doctrines pertaining to the spiritual world, which had hitherto not been familiar to his ears, but were to be communicated by the Messiah. By calling the subjects on which he had before spoken, *earthly things*, Jesus plainly enough intimated that, by the *kingdom of God*, ver. 3, 5, he meant his earthly reign, what we familiarly, though somewhat vaguely, term the gospel dispensation; and that, by being *born again*, he meant a change of opinion and conduct, similar in kind to that which the Jews described by the same term when speaking of converted Gentiles. It would be difficult to explain this language, on the supposition that, by the *new birth*, our Lord intended a radical change of nature, or by the *kingdom of God*, a state of endless happiness; for these subjects could scarcely be called *earthly things*, nor could Nicodemus be supposed, from his previous habits of thinking, capable of readily understanding them, ver. 10. A great change is doubtless necessary, to prepare even the best of men for admission into a heaven of endless holiness and happiness; but this, I apprehend, was not the subject of conversation here. "The matter in hand was about Nicodemus' translation into the days of the Messiah, of which the nation had so high thoughts, that is, as he thought, into a changed state of happiness; and, as it was indeed, into a changed principling and profession; to come under new grounds of religion, and under a new manner of pro-

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, which is in heaven.

fession, different from what he was under before. Our Saviour tells him, he must not think to slip into the participation of this kingdom, without any more ado than this; 'now the days of the Messiah are come; I shall have my share of the happiness of them, and they will even drop into my mouth;' but he must be newly moulded, out of his reliance upon his birth-prerogative, out of his legal righteousness, out of his carnal performances and ceremonious services; and, by a new birth, as it were, must be introduced into this new world and condition."—*Lightfoot*. Yet even these *earthly things* Nicodemus did not comprehend. How, then, could he understand purely spiritual instructions? ¶ *Heavenly things*. Things of a spiritual character; things beyond the reach of sight, and not within the reach of man's unaided reason. What follows, ver. 13—21, may be regarded as an abstract of the *heavenly things* here mentioned.

13. *No man hath ascended up, &c.* "None ascendeth into heaven, but he who descended from heaven; the Son of man, whose abode is heaven."—*Campbell*. "The perfect tense in the original ought to be rendered by the present, in the English translation, as it is often used in this gospel, and is accordingly rendered in ch. vi. 69; xi. 27; xx. 29; Acts iv. 10."—*Pearce*. The meaning seems to be this. None except myself can correctly describe heavenly things, for I alone ascend to heaven, that is, am permitted to have clear perception and knowledge of heavenly things. "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth." John v. 20. To communicate to mankind so much of these heavenly mysteries as might be profitable to them, Jesus descended from heaven, his proper home. If Nicodemus would not hear the word from his mouth, he must expect to die in ignorance; for none else could instruct him so accurately. ¶ *He that came down from heaven*. That is, the Lord Jesus, or the *Son of man*, as he here styles himself. This is one of the many passages, in which it seems plainly taught, that Jesus was by nature more than man, and that he existed in glory before

he appeared on earth. Thus he speaks: "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John xvii. 5. I confess myself unable to interpret such passages, in any satisfactory manner, on supposition that Jesus was simply a man, like one of us, only endowed with a greater degree of wisdom and power, and that he had no existence previous to his appearance on the earth. The precise rank and character of him whose whole life was a continuous miracle, I do not undertake to define. It is sufficient, that while he himself acknowledges the Father as his superior, John xiv. 23, his apostles style him the "beginning of the creation of God," Rev. iii. 14; the "only begotten Son of God," 1 John iv. 9; superior to the angels, the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. Heb. i. 1—9. These expressions obviously refer to his condition before he became incarnate. And they may prepare us to yield full and ready assent to the declaration of Paul, that the "mighty power" of God "wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," &c. Eph. i. 19—23. This state of exaltation we may well believe to be what Jesus calls a return to the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was. John xvii. 5. ¶ *Which is in heaven*. Or, whose abode is heaven. "*Who is in the bosom of the Father*, John i. 18, is a similar expression. Both are intended to denote, rather what is habitual and characteristic of the person, than what obtains at a particular instant. By the expression *who is in the bosom of the Father*, is meant, not only 'who is the special object of the Father's love,' but 'who is admitted to his most secret counsels.' By *whose abode is heaven*, is meant, 'whose abode, whose residence, whose home, is there.'"—*Campbell*. The phrase does not teach the omnipresence of Jesus, or that he was both on earth and in heaven at the same moment of time; but that, though

14 ¶ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up :

his temporary residence was on earth, his home was heaven. To be sure, in one sense, he might be said to be in heaven, while he remained on earth ; for, being holy, he enjoyed a heaven in his own bosom. But he seems, in this verse, to speak of heaven as a *place*, not a mere *state* of happiness, which is doubtless often its meaning ; for he speaks of ascending to heaven and descending from heaven ; and though it may not be proper to construe the expressions too rigidly, we cannot well avoid the conclusion that he represented heaven as somewhere else than on the earth.

14. Having announced his authority and ability to disclose *heavenly things* to men, Jesus proceeds to declare, first of all, that the knowledge and enjoyment of them are to be attained through faith in him ; and as a reason why he should be considered a faithful and true witness, worthy of all confidence, he alludes to the fact that he should seal his testimony with his own blood. ¶ *As Moses lifted up the serpent, &c.* See Numb. xxi. 8, 9. The Jews in the wilderness, for speaking against God and against Moses, were bitten by serpents, whereof many died. To stay the plague, God commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole ; and it was so, that any person, having been bitten, if he looked upon this brazen serpent, was healed. There is no evidence that this was designed as a figure of Christ, or of the virtue of his cross. But, being a subject familiar to the Jews, Jesus used it as a fit illustration of the manner in which he should be exhibited to the world by his death, and the benefits resulting from faith in him. ¶ *Even so.* In a similar manner. ¶ *Must the Son of man be lifted up.* Some understand this of our Lord's exaltation to glory. But this opinion does not seem to be supported by satisfactory evidence. On the other hand, there is good evidence that he predicted the manner of his death. A similar passage occurs, John xii. 32, 33 ; " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what manner of death he should die." The language under con-

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

sideration manifestly is of similar import. That he *must* be crucified, is sufficiently explained by his language to the disciples, Luke xxiv. 26.

15. *That whosoever believeth in him, &c.* The meaning of this verse is very similar to Mark xvi. 16. The reference is to the purifying influences of the gospel of Christ. Whosoever exercises a living faith in that gospel, and in him through whom it was revealed, is made free from the pollution of sin ; while unbelief naturally leaves the soul to grovel in its bondage to corruption. This purification or salvation is here styled *eternal life* ; those who remain destitute of it, are said to *perish* ; and the effects are coeval with their causes. While men remain in unbelief, they are in a perishing condition, or in a state of moral death ; but when they shall believe, at whatever period of their existence, then shall they also obtain eternal life, or a deliverance from sinfulness. This purification cannot be expected, in its fulness, until we shall be clothed upon with immortality ; but it is commenced even in the present life ; and in the same degree that it is accomplished, its happy subjects become partakers of *eternal life*. To this, Paul alludes, saying, " we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men, *especially of those that believe.*" 1 Tim. iv. 10. The salvation is designed for all, in the purpose of God ; but so much of it, at the least, as is bestowed in this life, is communicated through faith in Jesus and the gospel of his grace. It is observable, that there is no limitation of time, in which the blessing may be received through faith. None will contend that because Jesus said *believeth*, in the present tense, he intended to confine the blessing to them who at that moment were believers, and to exclude all who should afterwards believe on his name. But, if the phrase have not this rigid limitation, it has no limitation whatever. It has clearly the force of an indefinite future ; as if the phrase were, *whosoever shall believe*, that is, at any future time. It is clear, from ver. 18, that, while our Lord described the present consequences



16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

of belief and unbelief, he described this state of things as continuous in its character, and applicable to believers and unbelievers in all future ages. It is equally evident, from the same passage, that, by *eternal life* here, he intended especially that degree of salvation from sin which is enjoyed on the earth through faith, rather than that full measure of salvation which is indicated in ver. 17.

16. *God so loved the world.* The mission of Jesus was the effect of God's love, not the procuring cause of it. He came, not to purchase, but to manifest, that love; not to turn away divine wrath, but to exhibit unchangeable love. The idea that God regarded his children with anger, and that Jesus came to avert divine wrath, by the sacrifice of his own blood, is distinctly and positively contradicted here; and an assurance is given, that he came because God already loved the world. The same testimony is given by the apostles, Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 9, 10. The *world* here has its most extensive import, denoting the whole race of man. All were in equal need of the blessing, and the Giver is impartial. "It was for all the world. He tasted 'death for every man,' Heb. ii. 9. He 'died for all,' 2 Cor. v. 15. 'He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world,' 1 John ii. 2."—*Barnes*. Such is the uniform testimony of the scriptures. The tender mercies of God are over all his works, and he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, in its largest sense. See note on Matt. i. 21. ¶ *Gave his only begotten son.* See note on John i. 14. He gave his Son, by sending him to proclaim the riches of his grace; to exhibit a perfect pattern of righteousness; to save men from their sins, through the power of divine grace; to die in attestation of the truth; to bring life and immortality to light, by his teaching and by his own death and resurrection; and to reign in the hearts of men, after his own exaltation to his former glory, until all should cheerfully submit to his authority, and confess him to be Lord, to the glory of

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 ¶ He that believeth on him

God the Father. ¶ *Whosoever believeth, &c.* See note on ver. 15. By belief in the Son of God, men may enter into the present enjoyment of that blessing, which is secured to all by the love of God, manifested in the gift of his Son.

17. In this verse, the great purpose of our Lord's mission is distinctly stated by himself, and a sufficient reason assigned for his previous declaration. The gift of God was for the common benefit of all; and therefore whosoever laid hold on the promise by faith, realized that the blessing was for *him*, and entered upon its present enjoyment. ¶ *God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world.* It matters little, so far as the general idea is concerned, what particular meaning be assigned to the word *condemn*. If it mean, as some suppose, to *damn*, to sentence to endless misery, this was not the object which Jesus came to accomplish; for God sent him not to condemn. It would be difficult to reconcile with this declaration the fancy that millions will suffer more excruciating torment, to all eternity, than they would, if Jesus had never come into the world and *offered* salvation to them. Or, if a milder signification be assigned to the word *condemn*, and it be understood to mean a less severe punishment, yet it was not the object of Christ's mission to produce even such mitigated misery; for God sent him not to condemn. In a word, the great idea is, that God commissioned his Son, not to injure, but to benefit, mankind. ¶ *But that the world through him might be saved.* This was the great object, to which all others were subservient and of minor consideration. God sent his Son to save mankind, the world, the whole world, from their sins; to redeem them from iniquity; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus. Matt. i. 21; Acts xxvi. 18; Tit. ii. 14. This was the object for which God sent his Son. And this ob-

is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the

name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 And this is the condemna-

ject is just as certain of accomplishment, as it is true that God is greater than all, and none can pluck men out of his hands. John x. 29. However artfully men may endeavor to conceal the fact even from their own minds, and thus to delude themselves, it is nevertheless true, that to deny the full and exact accomplishment of the divine purpose, is to limit the Holy One of Israel, and to deny his omnipotence. Admit his omnipotence, and the accomplishment of his purposes, prompted by his love, cannot be denied. Whatever other results, therefore, may attend the mission of Jesus, we may confidently believe that the great object for which he was sent will be accomplished, and the world saved from sin. In the mean time, those who obstinately resist the force of evidence, and remain in unbelief, may become subject to condemnation, ver. 18 ; yet not so as to prevent the final accomplishment of the divine purpose, or to hinder the ultimate salvation of the persons thus condemned. And, moreover, this condemnation is to be regarded, not as the *object* of Christ's mission, but only an incidental circumstance connected with it. While the great work of salvation is in progress, which is to be accomplished through faith in Jesus, it necessarily happens, that unbelievers remain destitute of salvation ; and, so far as their unbelief is voluntary and criminal, they endure its proper penalty. This, however, was not the great object which Jesus came to accomplish ; but is to be regarded, like the hatred which unbelievers sometimes manifest towards the faithful, as incidental to the general purpose. These hindrances, obstructions, or incidental evils, so to speak, cannot prevent the final execution of the grand design. They were all distinctly foreseen ; yet God sent his Son to save the world ; we may safely conclude that he saw also how they might be overcome, rendered subservient to the general design, and in no wise prevent his Son from bestowing eternal life on all men, and raising them up at the last day. John vi. 39 ; xvii. 2.

18. In this verse, the immediate effect of his mission is described by our Lord, he gradual operation having been

noticed in ver. 15, and the final result declared in ver. 16, 17. ¶ *Is not condemned.* Is not guilty of voluntary rejection of the truth. The reference, as appears from ver. 19—21, is not so much to the general guilt of men and its condemnation, as to the particular guilt of resisting the force of evidence, closing the eyes in wilful blindness, and avoiding the light. This was true of many in that day, and in all succeeding ages. From such condemnation, believers were exempted. They believed the message of God by his Son, trusted in him as the Saviour of all men, and immediately enjoyed the special salvation which is the portion of them that believe. Coming under the influence of the truth revealed in the gospel, its purifying effect became manifest in their hearts ; they were weaned from sin ; they cultivated the heavenly virtues and graces ; became characteristically the children of God ; and thus not only avoided the special condemnation of unbelief, but were delivered in a measure from the bondage of sin and from its unhappy fruits. ¶ *He that believeth not.* This evidently has special reference to them who had the means or an opportunity to know the truth. They did not discern the light because they would not approach it, ver. 19, 20. Such was the condition of the Pharisees and others in our Saviour's day. And such also is the condition of many, even now. ¶ *Is condemned already.* He is guilty of wilful blindness, in addition to his general sinfulness ; and for this guilt, he is already under condemnation. He is condemned, for *not believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God*, whose divine mission was so conclusively manifested by his works, ver. 2. There can be no question, that the condemnation was for a particular sin, the sin of unbelief. That it was a condemnation passed and endured in the present life, is manifest from the fact, that it is described as having already taken place, while its subjects were yet living. And that it was not such a condemnation as to exclude the possibility of subsequent belief and salvation, is manifest from the fact, that Jesus continued to labor for the conversion of the persons

tion, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil

thus condemned, and prayed for them when hanging on the cross; and his disciples, in like manner, called upon them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out, assuring them that they were the children of the covenant of salvation, Acts iii. 19, 25. In short, unbelievers were under condemnation while their unbelief continued; but might afterwards believe, and no longer perish, but have everlasting life, ver. 16.

19. *This is the condemnation, &c.* This is a literal translation of the original; but the sense is more clearly expressed by Campbell, who translates, "this is the ground of condemnation." However true this may be, in regard to all who hear the truth and reject it, or who close their eyes against the light, yet there can be no doubt that it was spoken, like the preceding verse, with special reference to the Jews; for they alone, at that time, had access to the light of revelation. To them the light had come; and not until they had rejected it, did it enlighten the Gentiles and fill the world with its glory. ¶ *Light is come into the world.* The word *light* is a figure frequently used in the scriptures, sometimes denoting intellectual light or knowledge; sometimes, spiritual or moral light, or discernment of moral right and wrong; sometimes, holiness; sometimes, truth generally, or the gospel in particular. In this place, *light* seems to denote the truth revealed by Jesus; that truth which magnified holiness and condemned sinfulness; which was designed to make men holy; and which exhibited to the enraptured view of believers the total and effectual destruction of all sinfulness, and the establishment of holiness. ¶ *Men loved darkness, &c.* As *light* is put for the truth of the gospel, *darkness* denotes its opposite, or at least its absence, and stands for error. The Jews were so besotted in their erroneous expectations of a temporal Messiah, or one who should establish a temporal kingdom and subdue the Gentiles under their feet, that they would neither acknowledge the meek and humble Jesus

hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may

as the Messiah, nor listen patiently and candidly to his instructions. Hence they remained in darkness and were condemned. ¶ *Because their deeds were evil.* "Men who commit crime commonly choose to do it in the night, so as to escape detection. So men who are wicked, prefer false doctrine and error to the truth. Thus the Pharisees cloaked their crimes under the errors of their system; and amidst their false doctrines and superstitions, they attempted to convince others that they had a great zeal for God."—*Barnes.*

20. *Every one that doeth evil hateth, &c.* A general truth is here expressed, with special reference to the Pharisees and their associates. One reason, and a principal one, of their unwillingness to acknowledge Jesus as a teacher of truth, was that his doctrine exposed and condemned their wickedness and hypocrisy. They could not endure it, that he should represent them as sinners, when they had so zealously endeavored to cloak their vices and make the people believe them to be paragons of virtue. He so clearly exhibited the deformity of their character, by the strong light of truth, that they were shocked at the contemplation of their own features. What they most prided themselves on, their fasting, prayers, and manifold observances, he showed to be sinful, because performed with improper motives. Their rapaciousness, cruelty, and hypocrisy, were also held up to their astonished gaze; and they trembled, lest the people, discovering the resemblance, should cease to reverence them. Their deeds being thus reproved, they hated the light and avoided it. It was nothing to them that he spake as never man spake, and wrought miracles which clearly manifested the power of God; his doctrine condemned them as sinful, and they rejected it. Their conduct, though criminal, was perfectly natural. When men love sin, they steadfastly reject those counsels which condemn their vices. They avoid the light which would reveal their wickedness and cover them with confusion.

21. *He that doeth truth. Truth is*

be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, be-

cause there was much water there. and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 ¶ Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying.

here opposed to *eril* in ver. 20, and indicates good, or virtue. He who obeys the truth, or who practises righteousness, would express the idea here conveyed. ¶ *Come to the light*, &c. The virtuous man loves the light, and improves every opportunity to obtain more knowledge of divine truth. He carefully compares his conduct with that divine standard, that he may be satisfied in his own conscience whether his *deeds are wrought in God*, or are consistent with his requisitions. He is desirous also that the power of truth may be exhibited in his conduct, so that others, seeing his good works, may reverence the truth and glorify God. Matt. v. 16.

22. *Land of Judea.* The region near Jerusalem, in distinction from the city itself, which was situated in the land of Judea. He left the city, and went into the country. ¶ *And baptized.* Jesus did not administer water baptism, personally, John iv. 2; but he continued to make proselytes to his doctrine, and, by the ministry of his disciples, admitted converts into the kingdom of God, ver. 3, 5, or to the privileges of discipleship. This public admission was sealed by baptism, after the manner of the Jews, when they admitted proselytes, and of John, who administered the same rite to his converts.

23. *Ænon.* This place "was eight miles south of Scythopolis, between Shalim and the Jordan."—*Culmet.* ¶ *Salim.* The situation of this place is conjectural, except so far as it may be determined by the reference in the text. ¶ *Because there was much water there.* This remark is generally understood to furnish evidence that John baptized his disciples by immersion. Barnes, however, argues, with much plausibility, that this place was selected by John, not for the purpose of immersing converts, but that the multitude assembled might have a sufficient supply of water for their own neces-

sities, and for their camels. It may be added, that as John did not baptize by deputy, there was no real necessity that he should have *much water* for immersing. A single stream of running water would furnish a sufficient supply; for he could baptize in no more than one place at a time. But, although this text may not prove it, yet it is probably a fact that John did baptize by immersion. See note on Matt. iii. 6. This was the ordinary method of baptizing, among the Jews. But, because the Jews and John baptized in this manner, it does not follow that Christians are imperatively bound to observe the same mode. "Were it our undertaking to dispute this point, it might be showed how some things were in common and honorable use among the Jews, and so were continued and used by the converts to the gospel in Judea, which yet afterwards, and in other places, were laid aside or changed. And it were easy to show that sprinkling or pouring of water upon a person is called baptism, as well as dipping; and that the change of such a circumstance is no change or violation of the original institution."—*Lightfoot.*

24. *John was not yet cast into prison.* John continued to teach and baptize for some time after Jesus commenced his ministry. Yet he was imprisoned and cut off from his labors, before Jesus had organized his little band of apostles. See Matt. iv. 12—22. For an account of his imprisonment and death, see Matt. xiv. 1—12.

25. *A question.* Some say a controversy, or dispute. But the word elsewhere indicates merely a doubtful matter, or a questionable point, without implying anything acrimonious, or bordering on strife. The word occurs only here and Acts xxv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 4; vi. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 23; Tit. iii. 9. ¶ *Between some of John's disciples and the Jews.* "John's disciples had a dispute with a Jew."—*Campbell.* It is said

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold,

that the greater number of manuscripts, some of them of the highest authority, as well as the Syriac version, have *Jero* in the singular number. This reading is approved by Grotius, Hammond, Mill and Wetstein, and adopted by both Griesbach and Knapp. ¶ *About purifying.* It does not distinctly appear, from what follows, what was the precise point in question; though an intimation is given, ver. 27—31, that it referred to the comparative efficacy of baptism administered by John and by the disciples of Jesus. Baptism was regarded, by the Jews, as a purification; and it would seem that it was also regarded in a similar light by the early Christians. To this Peter alludes, when he cautions his brethren to remember that baptism is not efficacious simply as a purifying of the body, but as emblematical of a more important spiritual purification. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

26. *They came unto John.* That is, John's disciples came to him. They were so much perplexed, and possibly dissatisfied, by the events which they had seen or heard, that they desired to learn from their Master how he regarded them. They apprehended that his popularity would be eclipsed by the greater fame of Jesus, and desired him to secure to himself the credit which belonged to him as the first herald of the kingdom of God. ¶ *He that was with thee, &c.* That is, Jesus, whom John baptized in the Jordan. ¶ *To whom thou barest witness.* See John 29—36. ¶ *The same baptizeth.* As if they thought it improper that any should baptize, except John himself. ¶ *All men come to him.* There is a general gathering to him. He makes and baptizes more disciples than you do. John iv. 1. The people forsake you, and flock to him, for baptism.

27—36. In the remainder of this chapter, John explains to his disciples the reasonableness of the fact which had so much agitated them. He reminds them that he never claimed to be the Messiah, but uniformly acknowledged the Messiah as his superior. He distinctly intimates that Jesus was the Messiah, whose approach he had announced;

the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it

who was of heavenly birth; who was filled abundantly with the spirit; and on whom all ought to believe, in order to attain eternal life through faith. All this furnished a sufficient reason why Jesus should increase, and John decrease; and why the general gathering should be to Jesus, to the apparent neglect of John. The result, therefore, so unaccountable to John's disciples, was precisely what he himself had anticipated, and what he had taught them to expect, by directing them to look upon Jesus as the Lamb of God, the promised and long-expected Messiah. John i. 29—36.

27. *A man can receive nothing, &c.* Some suppose this language to refer to Jesus, and interpret it thus: "All success is from God. — If Jesus and his disciples are successful, if all men flee to him, it is proof that God favors him, and you should rejoice." On the principle that God exercises a general superintendence over all events, it is doubtless true that all success is granted by him. But I apprehend it is not a sound principle, that success furnishes sufficient evidence that an individual is specially commissioned by God, or even that he is engaged in the cause of truth and righteousness. Mahomet succeeded in drawing around himself many followers, and establishing a religion which prevails unto this day; but we do not therefore feel ourselves obliged to regard him as a prophet, or his doctrine as a revelation from God. We do not suppose him to have received his commission or his power from God, in the sense in which the language of the text is used. The same is true, in regard to many other impostors. The same was true, in regard to the Pharisees, who had persuaded the people that they were very paragons of piety; yet Jesus styled them hypocrites. See also Matt. xxiv. 11, 24; Acts v. 36, 37. It is an unsafe rule, to estimate the measure of a man's piety or favor in the sight of God, by his success in gathering around himself a multitude of eager and exulting listeners. I much prefer the opinion of those who understand John to refer to himself in this place,

be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the

bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

and to mean that he was not disposed to go beyond his commission, or assume to himself any authority or honor which God had not bestowed upon him. "One who by divine authority is entrusted with any commission cannot exceed that commission; since, therefore, God hath only made me the forerunner of the Messiah, as I have told you, ver. 28, I cannot pretend to be equal with him."—*Whitby*. "I have told you from the beginning, that I was only the forerunner of the Messiah; and was sent, not to form a *separate party*, but to point out to men that Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, ver. 28."—*Clarke*. "I do not, says John, arrogate to myself any greater authority than I know God has given me."—*Rosenmüller*. This interpretation is not only more consistent than the other with the principles of truth, but it better harmonizes with the succeeding verses, in which is stated the reason why John did not assume to be equal or superior to Jesus, and was not displeased at his success.

23. *Ye yourselves bear me witness, &c.* It was not now a new thing, for John to confess his inferiority to Jesus; and he appealed to his disciples, that he had uniformly disclaimed the Messiahship for himself, and had testified concerning a successor who should appear in that character. ¶ *I said, I am not the Christ, &c.* Or, the Messiah. See John i. 19—27. The testimony of John, on this point, as on others, was open and distinct. He announced himself as the precursor of the Messiah; but lest there should be any mistake, besides testifying that the Messiah was at hand, he positively and repeatedly asserted that *he* was not that personage. His disciples knew that fact; and to them he appealed. Why then should they expect him to retain his standing as the most eminent religious teacher, after the promised Messiah appeared? This distinction he had not received from God, and he did not claim it from men.

29. John declares, that, so far from

being dissatisfied at the superior attention and honor rendered to Jesus his joy is fulfilled in that very fact. He rejoices to witness the commencement of the glorious work entrusted to Jesus. ¶ *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, &c.* That is, the bride belongs to the bridegroom, exclusively. Nevertheless, his friend rejoices when he hears the bridegroom's voice; he shares the joy, though the possession of the prize belong solely to another. Thus also do I rejoice in the manifestation and success of the Messiah, notwithstanding to him belongs the glory and honor of saving mankind from their sins. *My joy therefore is fulfilled*, in witnessing the triumph of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The figure here employed was familiar to Jewish ears. At their weddings, there were generally two persons selected as friends of the bridegroom, to whom special duties were assigned according to the provisions of the Mosaic law. These were generally choice friends, who were interested in his happiness, and who rejoiced in his prosperity. The relation between Jesus and mankind, redeemed from sin, is frequently represented by the figure here used. See 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25—27, 32.

30. *He must increase, &c.* The morning star is a glorious object, while it is a herald of the sun; but when the sun himself appears, the glory of the star, gradually diminishing, is at length entirely lost to the view and overpowered by the brighter glory which succeeds it. So John excited the attention of the people, while he proclaimed the approach of the Messiah. "He was a burning and a shining light." John v. 35. But when *he* came who was the "Light of the world," John viii. 12, the less light was shorn of his beams, and the attention of men was fixed on that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John i. 9. This result John foresaw; but he did not regret it; on the contrary he rejoiced. He was willing to be forgot-

31 He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : he that cometh from heaven is above all.

ten entirely, so that Christ might be glorified by all. But he is not forgotten ; nor will he, while Jesus is honored as the Messiah. He will be remembered as the faithful herald, who was true to his trust, assuming nothing which had not been given him, but cheerfully and joyfully giving place to his superior and assisting to proclaim his glory.

31. *He that cometh from above is above all.* Having intimated distinctly that Jesus was the Messiah, and must increase while his forerunner decreased, comparatively, in the estimation of mankind, John assigned a reason why it should be so ; namely, that Jesus was more exalted in his nature, more accurately acquainted with the divine character and purposes, and more abundantly filled with the divine spirit, than himself or any other prophet of God. By *coming from above*, the same idea is expressed as by being *sent from God*, ver. 34, and often elsewhere. See note on ver. 13. *He is above all*, in his origin, as the only being in the universe who can be properly styled *the Son of God* ; in office, for to him alone was given commission to *save the world* from sin and misery ; in power and authority, for to him was given all power in heaven and in earth, and he shall reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, not excepting the last enemy, death. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, and not until then, he shall deliver up the authority thus delegated, and resign his kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Matt. xxviii. 18 ; 1 Cor. xv. 24—23. ¶ *He that is of the earth is earthly, &c.* Literally, “he that is of the earth is of the earth ;” the meaning is sufficiently obvious in the translation. By this contrast between the heavenly origin of Jesus and the earthly origin of all the prophets, an obvious reason is suggested why he should be regarded as worthy of more honor than they.

32. *What he hath seen, &c.* Other prophets uttered dark sayings, which perhaps they themselves did not fully

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth ; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that

comprehend ; but Jesus declared what he had seen and heard, what he knew to be true, and the import of which he understood. He was fully instructed in the will of God concerning men ; he distinctly comprehended the nature of his own mission ; namely, that he was sent, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, ver. 17. He was therefore worthy to be confided in by men, and his instructions to be sought in preference to those of John or any other prophet. ¶ *No man receiveth his testimony.* A general negative, which must be understood with a qualification, as is evident from facts before narrated, and from the succeeding verse. The meaning is, *few receive his testimony*, or acknowledge him as the Messiah, and fully credit the doctrines which he proclaims. It is worthy of remark, that although multitudes thronged him during almost his whole ministry, very few imbibed and preserved a living faith in him. Many believed him to be the Messiah ; yet they were so blinded by their Jewish prejudices, that they did not comprehend his doctrines, and did not receive his testimony in its purity. Indeed, to some extent, this was true of the apostles themselves. Yet, except during the interval between his crucifixion and resurrection, they trusted in him as the Messiah. But the great mass of *almost-Christians* fell off ; so that after the ascension, when the disciples assembled to elect an apostle in the place of Judas, the number was only “about one hundred and twenty.” Acts i. 15.

33. *He that hath received his testimony.* Who firmly believed the doctrines uttered. There were a few such, even then. To be sure, they did not fully comprehend the whole doctrine ; but they acknowledged the authority of the teacher, and believed his words were true. ¶ *Hath set to his seal, &c.* Or hath affixed his seal. “To seal an instrument, is to make it sure ; to acknowledge it as ours ; and to pledge our veracity that it is true and binding, as when a man seals a bond, a deed, or

God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his

a will. Believing a doctrine, therefore, in the heart, is expressed by sealing it; or by believing it we express our *firm conviction* that it is true, and that God who has spoken it is true. We vouch for the veracity of God, and assume as our own the proposition that it is the truth of God."—*Barnes*. Others understand the text in a particular rather than a general sense: "Rather, hath set his seal to this, that God is true; that is, hath acknowledged, (as a man does a writing to contain his mind by setting his seal to it,) that God hath performed his promise of sending the Messiah to instruct mankind, and hath now sent him."—*Pearce*. So Whitty and others. This may be the true interpretation of the primary import of this passage; and, at the same time, the former interpretation may express the truth in regard to believers generally.

34. *He whom God hath sent*. That is, Jesus the Messiah. ¶ *Speaketh the words of God*. The truth, the message which God commissioned him to deliver. Hence it is, that whosoever believeth the testimony of Jesus, acknowledges or avouches the veracity of God; see ver. 33. ¶ *The Spirit*. The spirit of wisdom, and power, and grace, by which the Messiah was qualified for his work. ¶ *By measure*. In a limited, or contracted degree. The meaning is, that God has not bestowed on his Son a small degree of the spirit, but has poured it out plentifully and abundantly; inasmuch that the Son has become the absolute representative of the Father, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3, and is therefore worthy of all confidence and honor.

35. *Loveth the Son*. That is, in a peculiar degree; and hence hath distinguished him from all other beings in creation. See Heb. ch. i. ¶ *Given all things, &c.* See note on Matt. xxviii. 18. This also is assigned by John as a reason why Jesus deserved

hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

the attention and respect of men, even though his own popularity should thus be thrown into the shade. Jesus came to proclaim the truth; and was enabled to do so, by the perfect knowledge communicated to him; ver. 11, 32—34. He came to save men from sin, and to bestow on them eternal life; and was enabled to do so, by the abundant power communicated to him for this special purpose, John xvii. 2.

36. *Hath everlasting life*. See note on ver. 15. The life enjoyed through faith belongs to believers while they live in the flesh. By faith they here pass from death unto life, and enjoy a special salvation. John v. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 10. ¶ *Shall not see life*. That is, while they remain in unbelief. But it by no means follows, that such persons could never afterwards believe. If it were so, then all who had not already believed, when these words were uttered, must perish without remedy. The evident import of the phrase is this; those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ enter into the immediate enjoyment of life; but so long as men remain in unbelief, so long they must remain destitute of this life, dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to all the miseries of such a state. But from this state of death they may be afterwards quickened, and when thus quickened or made alive, they shall become partakers of eternal life, even as others. See notes on ver. 15, and Mark xvi. 16. See also Rom. xi. 30—32; Eph. ii. 1, 5, 12, 13. ¶ *Wrath of God*. This is not to be understood literally, as if God cherished the emotion of wrath, which is condemned in men as utterly unholy. God is Love; and, strictly speaking, in him is no wrath at all. But he makes the unbelieving and disobedient suffer for their iniquity; and, in familiar terms, such punishment is styled divine vengeance, or the effect of God's wrath. Such is the meaning here. While men remain in unbelief, especially such inexcusable unbelief as is here indicated.



## CHAPTER IV.

**W**HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

they must endure its painful consequences. ¶ *Abideth on him.* Not, shall abide on him without end; but *abideth*; that is, so long as the unbelief continues. But when unbelief ends and a lively faith is cherished, the former children of wrath become children of God, and are admitted to heavenly places in Christ Jesus. See Eph. ii. 1—6; 1 Tim. i. 12—17.

## CHAPTER IV.

1. *The Lord.* That is, Jesus. ¶ *The Pharisees had heard, &c.* Some of the Pharisees had been baptized by John, and credited his testimony. Matt. iii. 7. But others, offended perhaps at his searching rebukes, represented him as an innovator, and made known their dissatisfaction to the Sanhedrim, who sent messengers to demand of John by what right he presumed to administer baptism. John i. 19—25. To these ruling Pharisees, members of that supreme ecclesiastical council, reference seems to be made here. They had heard the fame of Jesus, and he knew that they were exasperated against him. As he had not completed his work, and the time had not arrived when he should be cut off from his earthly labors, he prudently removed into Galilee, where their power was less absolute. He did not court danger, nor seek for persecution. But, as he directed his disciples to do, when he was hindered by opposition and persecution in one place, he retired to another, where he could more successfully carry forward his great work. Matt. x. 23. ¶ *Jesus made and baptized, &c.* What his disciples did, in his name, is said to have been done by him. It does not appear that he personally baptized any one, not even his disciples.

2. *Jesus himself baptized not.* Baptism was a common rite among the Jews, for the admission of proselytes, administered by John to his converts, and adopted also as a seal of admission

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

into the Christian church; but Jesus did not baptize them who first professed faith in him. There is no intimation that he ever baptized even one of his apostles with water. It has been supposed that Jesus refrained from baptizing, lest there should be disputes and heart-burnings between those who received baptism at his hands and those whom his disciples baptized. See 1 Cor. i. 11—17. But, for whatever reason he refrained, it would appear that, while he adopted this rite as the visible seal of admission into his kingdom, he did not regard or represent it as absolutely indispensable to salvation, here or hereafter, as he did not baptize his apostles.

3. *He left Judea, &c.* See note on ver. 1, and Matt. ii. 22.

4. *Must needs.* It was necessary; an obsolete phrase. ¶ *Go through Samaria.* This province was situated between Judea and Galilee, and the direct way from the one to the other was through Samaria. A circuitous road, on the east of the Jordan, through Peræa, was sometimes travelled. But the passage through Samaria was more direct and convenient.

5. *Sychar.* This city, otherwise called Shechem, or Sichem, and whose modern name is variously written Napolose, or Neapolis, or Nablous, was a city of Ephraim. Josh. xvii. 7. It was situated about forty miles northerly from Jerusalem, and ten miles from Shiloh. ¶ *Parcel of ground, &c.* The land given by Jacob to Joseph, by way of overplus, Gen. xlviii. 22, is supposed to have been near or perhaps adjoining Shechem or Sychar, which was the inheritance of Joseph's posterity, and where the bones of the patriarch himself were buried, having been brought up from Egypt. Josh. xxiv. 32. This supposition is natural, as the only *parcel of ground* which Jacob is recorded to have given individually to Joseph, is that mentioned in Gen. xlviii. 22.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of

me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw

water from the well; he asked it, therefore, of the woman, and most richly did he repay her for what she bestowed.

8. *His disciples were gone.* This is stated as the reason why Jesus desired water of the woman; the disciples had taken with them the drinking-cup, usually carried by travellers, with which they could draw up water from springs and wells, to quench their thirst. They had gone to *buy meat*, or food; for it was now noon, ver. 6, and they needed refreshment.

9. *The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* See notes on Matt. x. 5; Luke ix. 53. This remark is generally supposed to be the language of the evangelist, not of the woman. It was enough that she should express surprise that a Jew would ask water of her; Jesus needed not to be informed of the mutual enmity between the nations. The evangelist, writing for those who might not be acquainted with the fact, thought proper to mention it, in order to explain the otherwise unaccountable language of the woman.

10. *The gift of God.* Or, the favor of God; referring to the blessed opportunity granted to her, to obtain living water, or be instructed in the gospel of truth. ¶ *And who it is, &c.* That is, if you knew my true character, and recognized me as the Messiah. ¶ *Living water.* This phrase denotes, literally, the water of springs, fountains, or running streams, in contradistinction to standing pools or stagnant waters. The same phrase is sometimes used now, in a like sense. But our Lord used the words figuratively, to denote the gospel of truth, ver. 14. See Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 1, 17.

11. *Nothing to draw with.* The well was deep, and the water beyond reach,

6. *Jacob's well.* A well supposed to have been dug by Jacob, and which is still supposed to exist, and is pointed out to travellers. It is represented as somewhat more than a hundred feet in depth, hewn out of solid rock. ¶ *Sat thus on the well.* The word *thus* has been a subject of some perplexity. But the most probable solution is, that it has reference to the weariness of Jesus. He was weary, and sat thus, or as a weary man, on the well; or, as it might be translated, *by* the well. Perhaps the well had an elevated wall around it, on which Jesus sat to rest his weary limbs; for, while clothed in flesh, he was subject to its natural infirmities. It was common for travellers in the East to stop at wells for refreshment. Water was scarce and valuable. ¶ *Sixth hour.* Twelve o'clock, or noon.

7. *A woman of Samaria.* Or, a Samaritan woman; a woman of the province of Samaria, not of the city bearing that name; for this was about fifteen miles distant from the well of Jacob. As the woman came to draw water, she evidently dwelt in the vicinity; and it is probable, from ver. 28, that her home was in Sychar. ¶ *To draw water.* The well being deep, this was laborious; and when drawn, according to the custom of the country, the water was to be carried on the head, to the place of use. To such menial offices were females formerly subjected. And even now, their condition is not much improved, in barbarous countries, where the light of Christianity has not penetrated. But in Christian lands, one of the visible effects of the gospel has been, to restore woman to her proper position in society,—not the mistress or the slave of man, but his companion and help-meet. ¶ *Give me to drink.* Jesus was thirsty, but had no vessel to

with, and the well is deep : from whence then hast thou that living water ?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle ?

13 Jesus answered and said unto

her, Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again :

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

except by a line. She understood him to speak literally, and desired to know how he could procure the water which he proposed to give.

12. *Art thou greater, &c.* "As if she had said: If thou canst get this water without the trouble of drawing it out of the well, thou canst do more than Jacob could ; or, if thou knowest of a well hereabouts containing better water, thou art luckier than he was."—*Pearce*. ¶ *Our father Jacob*. Though the Samaritans so mortally hated the Jews, they prided themselves on their descent from the same ancestor. They claimed to be the children of Jacob ; and so indeed they were, though his blood had long before been mingled by their intermediate ancestors with the blood of Gentiles. ¶ *Gave us the well*. Or, prepared it for us. Such was then the tradition, even as now ; but the fact is not recorded in the Old Testament. ¶ *Drank thereof himself, &c.* This was added in commendation of the purity and wholesomeness of the water, and as an intimation that Jacob would not have been satisfied with this, if better water had existed in the vicinity. The same principle is discoverable here, which induces many to cling to time-worn fancies and creeds, on the plea that, if our pious forefathers could have found better, they would not have been satisfied with these, and as we are not wiser or better than they, it is folly to seek for more pure streams of gospel truth, which they did not find.

13. *Shall thirst again*. Without disputing the eminence of Jacob, for wisdom or piety, and without denying that the water of his well was very good of its kind, Jesus assured the woman that the water which he proposed to give was of superior quality and different in kind. Men who drank the water of Jacob's well would thirst again, however much it might refresh them ; but the water which he would give was of such sovereign efficacy, that it would

prevent thirst in future, ver. 14, or fully satisfy the desires. This was a sufficient intimation that he used the word *water* figuratively.

14. *Water that I shall give him*. There can be no doubt that Jesus refers here to the truth of the gospel, accompanied by the influence of his spirit. To drink of this water, is to exercise a firm and living faith in the gospel. ¶ *Shall never thirst*. Shall be perfectly satisfied ; shall desire nothing more or different. Such being the characteristic of the truth, a convenient test is afforded by which men may satisfy themselves, beyond reasonable doubt, whether they have in fact found the truth, and laid hold on it by faith. If, while they cherish that supreme love to God and fervent love to all mankind which Jesus requires of his disciples, the doctrine which they believe fully satisfies their desires respecting the character of God and the destiny of men, they have, at least, one evidence of its truth. But they may well question its truth, if it do not thus meet their desires, but leaves them to yearn and pray for something more satisfying, for any change in the divine character, or for any amelioration in the final destiny of all or any portion of mankind. ¶ *Springing up*. The truth, received into the heart, is not a dead, inactive principle ; but it springs or bubbles up like *living water* ; it animates to a faithful performance of duty ; it excites and invigorates those emotions of gratitude to God and kindness to men, which are at once the ornament and blessing of humanity ; it sustains the believer, in the most trying circumstances, enabling him to trust in God for all things ; and, having guided, prompted, purified, and cheered, through life, it supports him in the hour of death and enables him with all confidence and cheerfulness to commit his soul to his unchangeably merciful Father. ¶ *Everlasting life*. See note on John iii. 15.

15. *Sir, give me this water, &c.*

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and

Most commentators understand these words as spoken tauntingly, and indicating absolute unbelief in what Jesus had said. But they may be understood in a more favorable manner. The woman evidently misunderstood our Lord, and supposed him to speak of literal water; but still she addressed him courteously, and desired him to bestow that which she supposed might relieve her from future inconvenience in drawing water. I see no absolute need of supposing, with Lightfoot, "her answer to be rather by way of scoff, not supplication." See ver. 18.

16. *Call thy husband.* This was said, not because our Lord was ignorant that she had no husband, but as introductory to other remarks, designed to impress on her mind the fact that his knowledge was superhuman. It is not improbable, that he referred also to other events in her life, besides her different matrimonial connexions, which she supposed to be hidden from view; for she testifies, he "told me all things that ever I did." Ver. 29.

17. *Thou hast well said.* Thou hast told the truth. He perfectly well knew that she had no husband; he also knew that she had previously had the very unusual number of five husbands; for it must be remembered, that, while the Jewish males were permitted to have a plurality of wives, no female could lawfully have more than one husband at one time. It might well surprise her, that a stranger should so fully know this peculiarity in her history.

18. *Thou hast had five husbands.* Many have supposed, that this was an adulterous woman, and that she had been repudiated by five husbands, successively, for the same criminal cause. But this interpretation seems doubtful, at least, when it is remembered, that the penalty of adultery, among the Jews, was death; and although some might mercifully dismiss an offending wife privately, without attempting to enforce the law, it is scarcely probable

said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

that a notorious adulteress should be spared to marry five husbands, betray them all, and escape unpunished. It would seem more probable that she had lost her numerous husbands by death. ¶ *He whom thou now hast is not thy husband.* This phrase is usually interpreted to mean that the woman was living, in adultery, with a man who was not her husband. If this be the true interpretation, it does not follow that she had been false to her former matrimonial vows. But the passage is capable of a different interpretation. "*Ouk*, (οὐκ,) used instead of *oupō*, (οὐπω,) in this place signifies not yet," as in Mark viii. 17; xiii. 7; Deut. xx. 5, 6, 7. This woman seems to have formerly had five lawful husbands; these being dead, a sixth succeeded, to whom she was espoused, but had not yet been taken home to his house. So that it is not implied in the language of Jesus, that she had any improper connexion with her spouse."—*Rosenmüller*. On the subject of espousals before the consummation of marriage, see note on Matt. i. 18. The following remarks, in vindication of this Samaritan woman's character, are worthy of consideration. "It seems strange, that Jesus should, in no part of his discourse with her, reprove her for that sin of fornication, if she had been guilty of it under such gross circumstances. Nor is it likely, that a woman of so bad a life should have so much weight with those of her own city, as that they believed Jesus to be the Christ upon her testimony, ver. 39, 42; and least of all is it likely, that, when a discovery of her guilt was made to her by one whom she counted a prophet, ver. 19, the first thing which came into her thoughts should be that important question in religion, so much controverted between the Jews and the Samaritans, about the true place appointed by God for his worship. To all these it may be added, that it seems by no means probable, that a person of such an ill life, without

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men

any mentioned sign of repentance, should have been the first, perhaps the only, private person, to whom Jesus is recorded as declaring himself to be the Christ, as he did to her here in ver. 26." —Pearce.

19. *A prophet.* She did not recognize him as the Messiah, ver. 25; but she was satisfied that he must be a prophet, from the intimate knowledge he possessed concerning her. See ver. 29, and note on ver. 16. The word here has not its ordinary meaning, of one who foretells future events; for he had foretold none, in her hearing; but it means one who was inspired and guided by divine wisdom to discern the secret things of the past as well as the future.

20. Believing Jesus to be a prophet, and authorized to decide a question considered of the utmost importance, the Samaritan woman first of all presented it for consideration. She did not manifest any consciousness of aggravated guilt, which should render her unworthy to hold communion with a prophet, as we might expect her to have done, had she been so depraved as many have imagined. It is no answer, to say, that she was hardened in iniquity, and therefore exhibited a brazen front, conversing on religious subjects while her heart was absolutely festering in corruption; for Jesus knew the heart, John ii. 25, and was ready to rebuke hypocrisy and ungodliness, Matt. ch. xxiii.; but he did not rebuke her. ¶ *Our fathers.* The Samaritans. Perhaps she intended to include "our father Jacob," also, and the ancient patriarchs; for the Samaritans claimed to be their proper representatives. ¶ *Worshipped.* That is, statedly worshipped; came here to worship; for in this fact lies the point of the argument. ¶ *In this mountain.* Mount Gerizim, which was near Jacob's well and the city of Sychar; probably, it was in plain view, and pointed out by the woman as she referred to it. On this mountain the Samaritans had built a temple, somewhat after the fashion of that at Jerusalem, and here they had an established

ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

priesthood, and sacrifices, and the ordinary forms of religious worship. This place, they contended, was the spot designated by God for prayer and sacrifice. Hence grew up that mutual and rancorous hostility between the Jews and Samaritans, which is so frequently referred to in the scriptures. See ver. 9, and Luke ix. 52—54. It is a melancholy consideration, that some of the most disgraceful contentions among men have been professedly founded on religion. ¶ *In Jerusalem.* The Jews insisted that the temple in Jerusalem was the only acceptable place for public religious worship. And for this, they had better reason than the Samaritans for the contrary opinion; for while the temple at Gerizim is said to have been erected for the gratification of will, rather than of conscience, (see Jos. Ant., B. xi., ch. viii.,) the erection of that at Jerusalem was commanded by the Lord. 1 Kings viii. 12—21. Jesus gave the preference to the temple at Jerusalem, and kept the great feasts there during his ministry. He did not, however, decide the question proposed by the woman; but rather directed her attention to that great revolution in ecclesiastical affairs which was to result from the establishment of his kingdom. Religious worship was no longer to be confined to either of these temples or mountains.

21. *Believe me.* Our Lord speaks as one having authority. Matt. vii. 29. He affirms absolutely, and claims implicit belief. ¶ *The hour cometh.* The period is near. The kingdom of God was at hand, or about to be manifested and established on the earth, when the wall of partition between different nations was to be demolished, and a more pure faith to prevail; a faith which should recognize the fact, that God is always and everywhere gracious and ready to hear the cry of the humble and devout worshipper. ¶ *Neither in this mountain, &c.* That is, not alone in this mountain nor at Jerusalem. It is not denied that men may worship in either of those places; but worship is

22 Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers

not to be confined to either. The ancient practice of sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and other ceremonies, was to give place to a spiritual form of worship, which might be rendered in one place as well as in another, provided the heart were right before God. The effectual destruction of the temple at Jerusalem was one among other means employed by divine wisdom for accomplishing the desired change.

22. *Ye worship ye know not what*, &c. Campbell translates, "Ye worship what ye know not ; we worship what we know ;" and adds, that though his version differs apparently very little from the common translation, yet "in effect this makes here a considerable difference. The same thought is conveyed in both ; but in the former with the simplicity of the original, wherein great plainness is used, but nothing that savors of passion ; whereas it is impossible to read the latter without perceiving much of the manner of a contemptuous reproach, and what would have therefore more befitted the mouth of a Pharisee than of our Lord. — *What ye know not*, contrasted to *what we know*, implies, in the Hebrew idiom, not total ignorance, but inferior knowledge. — If the writings of the prophets were of importance for conveying the knowledge of the perfections and will of God, the Samaritans, who rejected all those writings, (receiving only for canonical the five books of Moses,) must, on this head, have been more ignorant than the Jews, which is all that our Saviour's words imply." ¶ *Salvation is of the Jews*. That is, the Messiah, who bringeth salvation, cometh from the Jewish stock ; for not only was it announced to the patriarchs that he should be of the seed of Abraham and Isaac, but it was also revealed that he should arise from the tribe of Judah and the family of David. See notes on Matt. i. 1 ; Luke ii. 30.

23. *The hour cometh, and now is*. It had been announced in ver. 21, that the change of dispensations,—the passing away of the Mosaic, with its forms and ceremonies, and the establishment of

shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit : and they that worship him, must worship

the Christian, with its spiritual worship,—was near. The assurance is here repeated, with an addition, *now is*, importing that the revolution was already in progress. The light was already in the world. The truth had already been proclaimed. Some had been convinced that God might be acceptably worshipped, wherever there was a devout heart. ¶ *True worshippers*. Not mere formalists, who rest entirely in the observance of prescribed ceremonies ; but those who feel their dependence on God and desire his aid, who realize his goodness and desire to express their gratitude, who are sensible of their obligations and imperfections, and desire to confess their sins and implore grace to help in time of need. ¶ *Shall worship the Father*. God alone is represented as the true object of religious worship. However much honor and gratitude is due to Jesus, for what he has done in the great work of human salvation, (and we need not fear cherishing or exhibiting too much of either,) still he represents the Father as the sole object of proper religious homage and adoration, as the only being who should be worshipped as God. ¶ *In spirit*. The work of the hands and the words of the lips are of no avail, in the sight of God, compared with the emotions of the heart. It is the worship of the heart which he seeks. This, and this only, is acceptable. The word *spirit* here indicates the heart, or the feelings, and denotes the pure incense of gratitude, in opposition to the forms and ceremonies, the sacrifices and literal incense, offered under the law. ¶ *In truth*. Not in words which belie the feelings ; but in the honest out-gushings of the sincere heart. Or, as some think, this actual worship is contrasted with the forms and ceremonies, which were but types and shadows of the reality. ¶ *The Father seeketh*, &c. No other worship is acceptable to him. The ceremonies, which he had formerly required, were designed to call forth the worship of the heart ; when they failed to produce this effect, they were valueless. He

him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things.

now required the same worship of the heart, without the intervention of rites and ceremonies.

24. *God is a Spirit.* "That is, immaterial, invisible, and infinite, not limited to space or time, nor possessing parts or passions. Acts vii. 48; xvi. 27, 29. Gross ideas of the nature of the Deity, from which the Jews did not wholly escape, have been prevalent in all ages. But the new Teacher rose at once above the mists and clouds which shrouded the nature of the Almighty, and while he met the highest yearnings of the human heart, by calling him Father, also answered the deepest want of the human intellect, by pronouncing him Spirit."—*Liv-  
ermore.* The spiritual nature of God is here mentioned, as a reason why spiritual worship is acceptable in every place, and why there was no necessity that it should be offered at any particular spot, as at Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim. For God, being Spirit, was not confined to any place, but pervaded the universe, and discerned the gratitude of the humble dweller in the wilderness as distinctly as the secrets of his heart who occupied the most exalted position in the temple. ¶ *They that worship him, &c.* That is, acceptably. No other than such spiritual and sincere worship is available in his sight. See note on ver. 23.

25. *I know.* The Samaritans, as well as the Jews, expected a Messiah, as predicted by Moses, whose writings they admitted to be of divine authority. ¶ *Which is called Christ.* These are doubtless the words of the evangelist. It is not probable, that the woman used the Greek language, or that she would add such an explanation. But the evangelist, writing for the instruction of them who used this language, and who knew Jesus by the name Christ, naturally explained the Hebrew Messiah by its Greek synonym, that they might at once understand of whom the woman was speaking. See note on John i. 42.

26. *I that speak unto thee am he.* This is the earliest declaration of his

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*.

27 ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no

Messiahship which our Lord distinctly made. And this was made to a Samaritan. See note on ver. 18. He did not declare himself openly to the Jews, lest his enemies should violently interfere with the proper accomplishment of his ministry, or his friends should be excited to mutiny and rebellion against the Roman government, from which they expected deliverance by the Messiah. To the Samaritans he could speak with more freedom, as they were less excitable, on this subject, than the Jews: and, in this particular case, as the woman was evidently an honest inquirer, and professed a readiness to credit the testimony of the Messiah, in its fullest extent, he declared to her his true character, that she might at once believe. His declaration seems to have produced its designed effect. See ver. 23, 29.

27. *Upon this.* At this time; at this period of the conversation. ¶ *Came his disciples.* That is, from the city, where they had been to buy food, ver. 8. ¶ *Marvelled that he talked with the woman.* Such friendly intercourse between Jews and Samaritans was unusual, ver. 9. It may not be obvious, at first sight, why the disciples should be surprised at this conduct of their Master, when they themselves had just been engaged in dealing with the Samaritans, by purchasing food. But, on this subject, the disciples probably made the same distinction which was common among the Pharisees, not yet having received special instructions from Jesus. "The Pharisees were, in their traditions, nice distinguishers. Buying and selling with Samaritans was permitted, because that was considered as an intercourse merely of interest or convenience; borrowing and lending, much more asking or accepting any favor, was prohibited, because that was regarded as an intercourse of friendship, which they thought impious to maintain with those whom they looked upon as the enemies of God."—*Campbell.* Social conversation with a Samaritan would be considered quite as criminal as asking or receiving a favor, and perhaps more so; hence the sur-

man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

prise of the disciples. ¶ *Yet no man said, &c.* They had such confidence in his wisdom and integrity, or so much respect and veneration for his character, that they did not presume to question the propriety of his conduct. It were well if all professed Christians were equally cautious, not only in judging the conduct of our Lord, but also in arraighing the justice of God himself. It is sufficient for us, that God has spoken: our business is to believe and trust. If we can penetrate the design or the reasons of his procedure, so to speak, well: if not, we should still confidently believe that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Gen. xviii. 25. And this we may do, without difficulty or misgiving, so long as we sincerely believe that God is Love, that he is good unto all, that his tender mercies are over all his works, and that he will have all men to be saved. Ps. cxlv. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 1 John iv. 16. In such a God we may confidently trust and rejoice.

23. *Left her water-pot, &c.* The bucket, or other vessel which she had carried to the well for water. She was so much excited by the information she had received, that, forgetful of the purpose for which she visited the well, she hastened to the city, to communicate the surprising intelligence.

29. *Which told me all things, &c.* The narrative is confined to what Jesus said respecting her domestic relations, ver. 17, 18. Very probably he also referred to other facts in her life, showing his intimate acquaintance with the past, as well as the future. ¶ *Is not this the Christ?* Her belief seems to have rested not so much upon his assertion of the fact, as upon the divine knowledge he displayed. Her case was not altogether unlike that of those who inquired, "when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" John vii. 31. But

31 ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that

though she probably gave full credit to the word of Jesus, confirmed by his manifestation of superhuman knowledge, she announced the fact to her brethren in the form of an inquiry, and desired them to make personal examination; as if she had said,—he told me the secrets of my heart; I pray you, go, and see whether he be not the Christ.

30. *They went out, &c.* That is, the men to whom the intelligence concerning Jesus was communicated. It is not probable that so much attention would have been paid to the testimony of the woman, if she had been such an abandoned character as many have supposed. See notes on ver. 18, 39. We may rather suppose that her character was fair, however peculiar may have been her matrimonial connexions.

31. *Prayed.* Asked, desired.

32. *I have meat, &c.* Meat is here used figuratively. Its meaning is explained in ver. 34.

33. *Hath any man brought, &c.* The disciples, as was generally the case at this early period, understood his language literally; and, knowing that their own supply of provisions was exhausted, supposed some person must have supplied their Master with food, during their absence.

34. *My meat is to do the will, &c.* It was the great leading object of our Lord to proclaim the truth, to exhibit the character of God, to instruct and reform mankind, and to reveal their glorious destiny. While engaged in this work, his bodily wants were forgotten, or willingly postponed. In the case under consideration, he had been instructing the Samaritan woman; and so intently was his mind fixed on this subject, that, though it was now mid-day, he had no appetite for material food. Such is the effect of strong mental excitement, or severe intellectual labor on men generally; their appetite, for



sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

season, is destroyed, and they feel no desire or need for food. Perhaps this is all which is here intended. But the remark of Jesus was true, in a much wider sense. So devoted was he to the great work entrusted to him, so much did he delight to do the will of God, Ps. xl. 6—10; Heb. x. 5—9, that he not only freely endured hunger, and thirst, and similar inconveniences; but became obedient also even to the death of the cross, filially exclaiming, in the hour of his most intense agony, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Luke-xxii. 42. Well might he say, and well may we believe, that it was his meat to *do the will of God*, and to *finish his work*. To this labor he devoted his energies unremittently. And his labor was not in vain. As he was expiring on the cross, it consoled him that his work was successfully closed. Looking forward to the period, when all should become his willing subjects, through the power of the truth and the influence of the grace he had manifested, when they should bow the knee in his name and confess him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father, when death and its sting, which is sin, should be destroyed, all tears wiped from all faces, the whole creation delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God, —looking forward to such a blessed consummation of his labors, "he said, *It is finished*; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." John xix. 30.

35. *Say ye not, &c.* Or, ye say. This seems to have been a proverbial expression; the time which intervened between seed-time and harvest in Judea being generally about four months. ¶ *Lift up your eyes, &c.* See notes on Matt. ix. 37, 33, where a similar figure of speech occurs. It is generally supposed, that Jesus had special reference here to the company of Samaritans who were approaching from the city. This conversation with the disciples, ver. 31—33, was "in the mean while," as the evangelist expresses it, between the de-

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

parture of the woman, ver. 23, and her return with the men of the city, ver. 40. They were now probably in sight; and, directing the attention of his disciples to them, Jesus said, Behold, a harvest is even now ready to be gathered from the seed I have sown, during your absence. We need not wait four months, like the husbandman; but we reap immediately. ¶ *White already to harvest.* This figure is drawn from the fact, that, in most kinds of grain, as the period of ripeness approaches, the color changes from green to a yellowish white.

36. *He that reapeth receiveth, &c.* The same figure is continued through this verse. The meaning seems to be this: as the reaper of grain receives compensation for his labor, so a rich reward awaits those who gather in souls to the enjoyment of eternal life. See note on John iii. 15. In other words, he who instructs others, and enables them to believe the truth of the gospel, which yields life to the believer, shall receive into his own bosom an abundant reward: probably referring to that pure and holy enjoyment which results from a consciousness of faithfulness, as in ver. 32, 34. ¶ *That both he that soweth, &c.* Some understand this, generally, as 1 Cor. iii. 4—10, to mean that those who sow the first seeds of truth in the mind, and they who cultivate the plant of faith until it has fully ripened, are joint-laborers in the same work, and equally partakers of the joy resulting from faithfulness. Others understand our Lord to have special reference to the case then in hand; and to mean, that he had sown the word in the heart of the woman, and, by her ministry, in the hearts of the men who were approaching; that his disciples should now assist in gathering the harvest, by assisting to make known the truth already communicated to them; and thus they would rejoice together, in the success of the gospel.

37. The saying here quoted, which seems to have been a familiar proverb,

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour : other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

indicates the well-known fact, that in very many respects, men reap the fruits or enjoy the advantages resulting from the labors of their predecessors ; these again sow the seeds which produce fruits for the benefit of succeeding generations. The particular application of this proverb here, is given in ver. 33.

38. *I sent you to reap, &c.* Some explain this verse thus : I have commissioned you to preach the gospel, and to gather souls into the kingdom ; but the seed was sown by me ; on that you bestowed no labor. *Other men*, that is, the prophets who predicted my coming, John the Baptist who announced my approach and exhorted to repentance, and myself in teaching, suffering, and dying, have prepared the way for you. Your business is to enter into our labors, and to reap the harvest which we have cultivated. Others thus ; "Jesus would say, I have sown the seed ; I first taught ; I have shunned no labor ; I have conducted you to the reaping of the fruits, that ye might rejoice with me. Jesus had performed the sowing, by establishing the foundations of religion and the church on earth ; but he did not reap, that is, he did not witness the fruit of his labor, while he lived in this world ; he saw not a church even in Judea, much less the wide propagation of his doctrine beyond Palestine. But the apostles saw all these things, who, being sent forth by Christ, reaped the fruits which they had not cultivated."—*Rosenmüller*. Others, again, apply the language more closely to the event which seems to have called it forth, thus : "Rarer, *I sent you away that ye might reap* ; that is, I did not send you to the city, ver. 8, for this purpose only, that ye might buy meat ; but I sent you away chiefly with this intent, that there might be a harvest for you to reap, upon your return, though you sowed no seed and bestowed no labor for that purpose. While ye were gone, I sowed spiritual

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them : and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed, because of his own word ;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying : for we have heard him

seed in the heart of a Samaritan woman ; and she is gone, and about to return with many of her city, whom she has brought to *believe*, ver. 39, 42. These, and the *many more* which will believe upon hearing my doctrine, ver. 41, will all be a harvest arising out of the seed which I sowed in your absence, and therefore whereon ye bestowed no labor."—*Pearce*. Very probably the language of Jesus had a special reference to the case of the Samaritans ; though I would not choose to adopt this last interpretation in full, to the exclusion of the more general reference embraced in the two former.

39. *Samaritans—believed—for the saying of the woman.* They had so much confidence in her veracity, that they believed her testimony ; and the circumstances related by her led them to believe the Messiah had actually appeared. Thus did they attain the blessing, of which our Lord testified, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John xx. 29. Thus may we also believe upon the testimony of the apostles and evangelists, and be blessed.

40. *He abode there two days.* Upon the solicitation of the Samaritans, he entered their city, and further instructed them, during two days. "He abode there so long, that he might not condemn persons so desirous to learn of him ; he stayed no longer, that he might not neglect the Jews or seem to prefer the Samaritans before them. And he commanded his apostles not to go to any city of Samaria, Matt. x. 5, because the gospel was first to be preached to the Jews and then to the Samaritans. Acts i. 8."—*Whitby*.

41. *Many more believed.* That is, that he was the Messiah. His labor among them was not in vain, but effectual to the demonstration of the truth.

42. *Not because of thy saying.* No imputation upon the testimony of the wo-

ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 ¶ Now, after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things

that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come

man is implied here, as if it were considered unworthy of credit; the phrase is idiomatic, and means, we believe not so much upon thy testimony as upon the evidence which our own eyes and ears have witnessed. ¶ *Know that this is indeed the Christ.* This is a strong manner of expressing a firm conviction of the fact. When the apostles, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, say they *know*, we are to understand the declaration literally. But when the Samaritans use the same phraseology here, we can only understand that they were fully satisfied and convinced; because the fact, thus *known*, was a subject of faith, rather than of absolute knowledge, except by direct inspiration. ¶ *Saviour of the world.* It may justly be doubted whether the Samaritans fully comprehended the spiritual nature of our Lord's mission, or the full import of their own language. It is worthy of remark, however, that they more nearly approximated the truth than the Jews; for they believed the Messiah came for the general benefit of mankind, or to bless the world, while the Jews expected a mere national deliverer, who should exalt the Israelites, and depress all others.

43. *Into Galilee.* See note on Matt. ii. 22. We are not informed what part of Galilee Jesus first visited, after leaving Samaria. It evidently was not Nazareth. See ver. 44.

44. *A prophet hath no honour, &c.* A common proverb. See note on Matt. xiii. 57. ¶ *In his own country.* In the application of this proverb to himself, by *his own country*, Jesus probably referred to "Nazareth, where he had been brought up," Luke iv. 16, and not to the province of Galilee generally. Else here would be no apparent propriety in

his use of the proverb; for he went into Galilee for the very reason which should have induced him to avoid it, unless he used the word *country* in a limited sense. The point of the proverb is, that a prophet is less honored by his intimate acquaintances, who have known him from a child, than by others. Jesus was little known beyond Nazareth, until he commenced preaching; and he was uniformly less honored in Nazareth often called "his own country," than elsewhere. See Matt. xiii. 54—53 Mark vi. 1—6; Luke iv. 16—24.

45. *Received him.* That is, received him courteously and respectfully, in manner consistent with his prophetic character. And the reason is given they had seen him previously, and were convinced by his works that he was a messenger from God. ¶ *At the feast* See John ii. 13, 23.

46. *Cana.* See John ii. 1. ¶ *Certain nobleman.* One high in rank or office. It does not appear whether his home was at Capernaum, (which is said to have been about a day's journey from Cana,) or whether his son became sick there, while on a journey or otherwise. Some of the circumstances related here are very similar to the case mentioned, Matt. viii. 5—13. Yet, in other respects, there are so many differences, that it is generally believed the two evangelists do not refer to the same transaction.

47. *He went unto him.* Though more powerful than Jesus, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, he did not hesitate to acknowledge his inferiority and need of aid, where extraordinary and miraculous power was required. It is one of the blessed fruits of affliction, that it makes the self-confident and the haughty realize their own feebleness,

down, and heal his son : for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way ; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went

and disposes them to seek aid from a more powerful being. Had health and prosperity attended this nobleman's family, he might not have noticed Jesus, or he might have disdained his humble and unpretending appearance. But when his son was smitten by disease, he anxiously sought him, with the hope that his power might be as available to bless him as it had been in blessing others. ¶ *Would come down.* He doubtless supposed that Jesus could not cure his son, unless he should be present with him. It does not appear that he had hitherto performed any miracles, except upon persons or objects which were in his presence. But that men might know that his power was not thus circumscribed, he did not now visit Capernaum, as the nobleman requested, but healed his sick son at the distance of a day's journey.

43. *Except ye see signs, &c.* "That is, I perceive that it is necessary for me to work miracles, without which men will not be induced to believe. Though Jesus spake this to the nobleman, it is probable that he meant it of the Galilean Jews in general."—*Pearce*. From the circumstances of the case, I think the language of our Lord should not be understood as a reproof to the nobleman, who had already manifested so much faith and respect, by imploring his assistance.

49. *Come down, &c.* The nobleman still supposed that Jesus could not cure his son, unless he should see him ; and with all a father's anxiety implored him to hasten at once, before it should be too late.

50. *Go thy way.* As much as to say, depart in peace ; your request is granted ; you need not further urge or intreat. ¶ *Thy son liveth.* That is, he shall live ; he shall not die of this disease. ¶ *The man believed the word.* He was con-

vinced that his son should recover, even though Jesus did not visit him as requested to do. It often pleases God to bless us, not in the particular manner we desire, but by means which do not appear to us conducive to the desired end. In this case the nobleman thought if Jesus declined to go to Capernaum, his son must die ; Jesus declined to go, but assured him that his son should recover. The father believed and rejoiced. In like manner should we believe that God will bestow on us *such things as we need*, even though he do it not by those means which seem to us the best and most direct. Happy are we, if we can confidently await his pleasure, not doubting that, whether or not our special requests be granted, he will bestow such blessings as shall most effectually benefit us.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which

vinced that his son should recover, even though Jesus did not visit him as requested to do. It often pleases God to bless us, not in the particular manner we desire, but by means which do not appear to us conducive to the desired end. In this case the nobleman thought if Jesus declined to go to Capernaum, his son must die ; Jesus declined to go, but assured him that his son should recover. The father believed and rejoiced. In like manner should we believe that God will bestow on us *such things as we need*, even though he do it not by those means which seem to us the best and most direct. Happy are we, if we can confidently await his pleasure, not doubting that, whether or not our special requests be granted, he will bestow such blessings as shall most effectually benefit us.

51. *His servants met him.* They were surprised at the sudden change in the condition of the sick person, and hastened to inform the father, that he was recovering, and the danger apparently passed.

52. *Seventh hour.* One o'clock in the afternoon.

53. *The same hour.* At the very time. Herein was the miracle more manifest. *The fever left the patient suddenly*, at the very instant when Jesus willed the cure, and announced it. There could have been no possible deception or collusion in this case. ¶ *Himself believed.* The father no longer doubted. His faith seems not to have been fully confirmed, until this moment. But when he knew that his son was healed at the instant when Jesus pronounced the word, he no longer doubted his power to heal even at a distance, or that he was divinely commissioned. ¶ *And his whole house.* Or, family. They witnessed the marvellous effect, though they knew not the cause until

Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth : and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

## CHAPTER V.

**A**FTER this there was a feast of the Jews : and Jesus went

the nobleman informed them. They had seen the miracle ; it only remained that they should learn by whom it was performed, in order to exercise faith in him.

54. *This is again, &c.* "This second miracle Jesus performed after returning from Judea to Galilee."—*Campbell*. This version more plainly expresses the sense of the passage. The meaning is, not that this was the second miracle he performed after his return ; but the second performed in Cana, or in that part of Galilee. See John ii. 1—11.

## CHAPTER V.

1. *Feast of the Jews.* There were yearly three great feasts of the Jews, at which every adult male was bound to be present at Jerusalem ; namely, the passover, the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. Some commentators suppose this to have been the passover ; and some, the pentecost.

2. *Sheep-market.* There is nothing in the Greek answering to *market* ; and many prefer to insert *gate* instead. The principal reason for this change is, that the sheep-gate is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, but no notice is found of a sheep-market, either there or in any other Jewish writings. As the sheep-gate was used for the admission of sheep into the city, most of which were designed for sacrifice, it was probably near the temple, in the vicinity of which there is now a pool supposed to be the same here mentioned. ¶ *A pool.* A small body of water, either in a natural or an artificial basin. The original seems to denote a bath for swimming ; or at least a collection of water sufficiently capacious and deep for swimming. Some suppose the pool was chiefly used for this purpose ; others, that it was used for the washing of sheep for sacrifice ; others, again, that the water possessed medicinal qualities,

up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep *market*, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, *Bethesda*, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a

and was therefore a resort for invalids. ¶ *Bethesda.* This was the Hebrew name of the pool, denoting *house of mercy*. ¶ *Five porches.* Or, covered places, serving as a shelter from the sun and the rain. The place supposed to have been the ancient pool of Bethesda, is square ; and probably on each of three sides was one porch, and two on the remaining side. Sandys, in 1611, and Maundrell, in 1697, describe an excavation in the rock, which they suppose identical with this pool, of an oblong form, about one hundred and twenty feet, (or paces—*Calmet*,) in length, forty in breadth, and eight in depth. It contained little water when Sandys saw it, and none, when examined by Maundrell. It seems to have been filled by a spring which issued through a crevice in the wall, several feet above the level of the pool. Some have supposed this an intermittent spring, highly medicinal, but soon losing its sanative qualities on exposure to the air ; and have thus accounted for the fact that none were healed of disease by the water, except those who entered immediately after the gushing forth of the water.

3. *Impotent folk.* Weak and feeble persons. The word denotes those whose strength was prostrated or who were otherwise disabled, rather than those who suffered acute diseases. In the enumeration of the several classes, the same characteristic appears, of disability, rather than of suffering. ¶ *Waiting, &c.* The remainder of this and the whole of the succeeding verse is regarded as spurious by Griesbach, Knapp, and other critics. It is supposed to have been inserted by some early transcriber, in explanation of the troubling of the waters, ver. 7. The passage is wanting in several ancient manuscripts ; yet it is doubtful whether the evidence be sufficient to justify its rejection from the text. And where a reasonable doubt

certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long

exists, it is more wise and prudent to preserve than to reject what purports to have been written by one authorized to reveal the will of God, or to speak with authority in his name.

4. *An angel.* Literally, a messenger; and frequently in the scriptures a divine messenger. Yet the Jews gave this name not only to intelligent ministering spirits, but also to the elements which executed the purposes of God. See note on Matt. i. 20. It is not related that any one saw the angel go into the water; the moving or troubling of the water was noticed, and as such beneficial effects followed, they naturally attributed the work to an invisible angel; or perhaps figuratively thus denominated what they understood to be as natural as the blowing of the winds or the roaring of the thunder. ¶ *Whosoever then—first stepped in.* It is not necessarily implied that only one person received benefit, though a remark in ver. 7 has somewhat that appearance. If there were an intermittent spring, which periodically gushed forth into the pool, whether from a fissure in the rock above the surface, or from beneath, thus disturbing the waters, and if it were of such kind that its medicinal power was soon exhausted by exposure to the air, or mingling with the mass of water in the pool, as some have supposed, it may be that so many as plunged in, immediately, received benefit, while those who were more tardy failed of relief.

5. *An infirmity.* The precise kind of infirmity is not named; yet it is evident that the man was helpless, not able to walk from his couch to the pool, ver. 7. He had long been in this situation; perhaps not so utterly helpless during the whole period of thirty-eight years, as at that moment; but the disease may have been gradually wasting his strength, until he was at last reduced to this pitiable condition. This

time in that case, he saith unto him Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was

was a case of well-known infirmity. None could suspect collusion. It is not within the bounds of probability, that this man should have feigned himself infirm, from a period before the birth of Jesus, that he might also feign a cure at his word; or that the Jews should have believed that he had long been infirm, unless he was known to them as having at least the appearance of such infirmity.

6. *In that case.* There is nothing in the Greek answering to these words. They were added to complete the sense; namely, that Jesus knew the man had long been infirm, not that he had been long waiting at the pool.

7. *I have no man, &c.* This is substantially an affirmative answer to the question of Jesus. Understanding him to refer to cure in the manner usually obtained at that place, the infirm man intimates that he resorted there for that purpose; but being both helpless and friendless, he had not been able to bathe in season to obtain relief.

8. *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* As much as to say, Be healed of thine infirmity and restored to health and strength; as it was impossible, otherwise, that he should obey the command. The *bed* was a mattress or blanket, not a heavy burden for a man in health. See note on Matt. ix. 2.

9. *Immediately, &c.* The cure was instantaneous, and therefore miraculous. Restoration to health, by ordinary means, must have been slow and gradual. Here it was effected by a word, and in a moment; the power by which it was accomplished was manifest. ¶ *Sabbath.* See notes on Matt. xii. 1—8, 12. The following remarks are sensible, and worthy of attention. "To carry burdens on the sabbath was forbidden in the Old Testament. Jer. xvii. 21; Neh. xiii. 15; Exo. xx. 8—10. If it be asked then why Jesus

made whole, and took up his bed, and walked : and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day ; it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What

commanded a man to do on the sabbath what was understood to be a violation of the day, it may be answered, (1.) That the Son of man was Lord of the sabbath, and had a right to declare what might be done, and even to dispense with a positive law of the Jews. Matt. xii. 8 ; John v. 17. (2.) This was a poor man, and Jesus directed him to secure his property. (3.) The Jews extended the obligation of the sabbath beyond what was intended by the appointment. They observed it superstitiously, and Jesus took every opportunity to convince them of their error, and to restore the day to its proper observance. Matt. xii. 6—11 ; Luke vi. 9 ; xiii. 14 ; xiv. 5. This method he took to show them what the law of God really permitted on that day, and that works of necessity and mercy were lawful.”—*Barnes*.

10. *It is not lawful, &c.* See the preceding note. Though the Jews were remiss in regard to the “weightier matters of the law,” they were punctilious in ceremonial observances. Matt. xxiii. 23. Among these was the entire cessation of labor on the sabbath. They often brought railing accusations against Jesus for alleged violations of the law in this respect. In this case, they reprove the man miraculously healed, for carrying his couch to his own house.

11. *He that made me whole, &c.* The reply of the man, thus reprovèd, was perfectly natural ; and the obvious judgment of common sense was true in this case, as indeed it almost uniformly is. One who could miraculously restore strength had a right to direct the first employment of that strength ; and it was safe and prudent to obey his direction. Even the Jews seem to have admitted his justification ;

man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk ?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was : for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole : sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told

for they did not persist in reproving him, but demanded to know who the person was, by whose authority he had thus violated the sabbath.

12. *What man is that, &c.* Doubtless they suspected it was Jesus, against whom they had imbibed strong prejudices ; else, instead of being so indignant at a breach of law, they would have been filled with admiration at the remarkable cure wrought on the supposed offender. Overlooking entirely this display of divine power, and not considering that *God doth not aid sinners*, John ix. 31, they seized upon the fact that the law of the sabbath had been disregarded, and were desirous to bring the offender forthwith to judgment and condemnation.

13. *Wist not who it was, &c.* Probably he had never seen Jesus until that day ; and he was so much enraptured at his own restoration, that he had not inquired the name of his benefactor, until it was too late, if indeed he had made any inquiry.

14. *Findeth him.* No more is necessarily implied than that they met each other. ¶ *In the temple.* The man seems to have gone to the temple, on the very day of his cure, to return thanks to God for his great deliverance. Would that all who are delivered, by more ordinary means, from sickness and infirmity, or from evils which they endure or fear, were alike mindful of their obligations to God, and ready to offer thanksgiving and praise. ¶ *Sin no more.* See note on Matt. ix. 2. It is not improbable that this man's infirmity was occasioned by intemperance, gluttony, or some other sinful excess. It often happens, that men thus destroy their health, and bring on themselves pains and infirmities grievous to be

the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

17 ¶ But Jesus answered them,

borne; for to every sin God hath connected its punishment, which, in one or another form, must be endured. ¶ *A worse thing come unto thee.* A more grievous disease. By whatever cause his infirmity had been produced, if the cause should be repeated, he might expect a relapse, and his last state would be worse than the first.

15. *Told the Jews, &c.* No improper motive is here suggested. He had no design to injure his benefactor; but, for his own justification, he told the Jews, by whose authority he carried his bed home from the pool, on the sabbath.

16. *Jews persecute Jesus, &c.* See note on Matt. xii. 14. They were indignant that any one should attempt to interfere with the rules and customs of their ecclesiastical tribunals; and without regard to the evidence of his authority to do so, which was manifested by his works, they condemned him at once as a sinner. He had not, in fact, violated the sabbath in any greater degree than themselves; and he had done it with much better reason. See Matt. xii. 10-13; Luke xiii. 11-17. The real offence was, that they felt rebuked by the purity of his life, the kindness of his deeds, and the searching spirit of his language; they scorned to learn wisdom from his mouth; and, utterly unable to resist his wisdom and his miracles, they resolved to destroy him, under pretence of regard for the law.

17. *My Father worketh hitherto.* Probably the Jews had accused him, personally, of breaking the sabbath, by healing the impotent man; for to such a charge his language is a fitting answer. In justification of himself, our Lord says his Father works continually, in bestowing benefits on man. "That is, from the beginning till now he rested from creating the world; but he never rested from governing and preserving it; in this respect he keeps no sabbath, and (after his example) I do not with respect to such acts of mercy

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

as healing is."—*Pearce.* ¶ *And I work.* As a general truth, no man should consider it a profanation of the sabbath to be actively engaged in irritating God; if he labor with an honest and sincere purpose to relieve the distressed, to heal the sick, to advance the highest happiness of men, he does not transgress. It is on this principle, that physicians are justified in attending the sick, and clergymen in laboring to advance the spiritual interests of their flocks, on the sabbath; and on the same principle are all justifiable who strive, on the sabbath, to do good to their fellow-men; for in so doing they humbly imitate him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and who never ceases to bestow blessings on his children. But, in this particular case, there was a peculiar propriety in the conduct of our Lord. He was sent, by the Father, as the representative of his own person, to display his glory, and communicate blessings to mankind. It was manifestly proper that he should imitate the Father, by doing good, without respect to times and seasons.

18. *Sought the more to kill him.* They were more enraged at his answer, than at his previous conduct; and more desirous to destroy his life. ¶ *Had broken the sabbath.* The evangelist simply states the opinion of the Jews. He does not mean to say that Jesus actually broke the sabbath, or assumed to be equal with God; but only that the Jews so regarded the matter. They alleged that works of mercy were a violation of the sabbath; Jesus denied it; of course the evangelist believed him rather than them, and cannot be understood to assert that he had broken the sabbath. ¶ *Equal with God.* In like manner, the Jews alleged that he made himself equal with God, and was guilty of blasphemy, because he said that he was the Son of God; he denied the correctness of their conclusion, and showed that he might properly style himself the Son of God, in a sense



19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For the Father loveth the

Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

which was true of no other being in the universe, notwithstanding God was his superior and the only supreme Governor of the universe, John x 33—38; of course the evangelist believed him rather than them, and did not intend to assert that Jesus actually assumed to be equal with God, but only that the Jews so understood or chose to represent his language.

19. *The Son can do nothing of himself.* Our Lord designed to remove the false impression received by the Jews from his previous declaration. He knew they supposed him to claim equality with God, ver. 18; and therefore he distinctly announced his dependence on the Father, and disclaimed that equality which they supposed him to assume. Thus did he uniformly acknowledge the superiority of the Father and profess to be governed by his will. ¶ *What he seeth the Father do.* In other words, the Son can do nothing except what God approves; he may imitate the works of God, in conferring blessings on men; these things he has seen the Father do, and he knows they are acceptable in his sight. But he cannot do that which God disapproves, or act without his permission and assistance. ¶ *What things soever, &c.* A general assertion, that he would fully display the divine character, and amply manifest that divine energy which dwelt in him.

20. *The Father loveth the Son.* This surely does not imply identity of person or being, but a manifest distinction. The Father had bestowed this power and authority, or, in other words, had anointed him as the Christ, because he loved him. ¶ *Sheweth him all things, &c.* Makes him acquainted with the divine purposes, so that he can always know what conduct is consistent with the divine will; he therefore knows, not only what is and what is not a violation of the sabbath, which is the present subject of accusation, but, in all

other things also, he is guided by the same spirit of divine wisdom and knowledge of the will of God. The expression is general, but should be understood with this limitation,—that so much wisdom only was communicated, as was necessary for the accomplishment of the work assigned him. Some of the divine purposes seem not to have been communicated to him. See Mark xiii. 32; Acts i. 7. ¶ *Greater works.* Some understand these *works* to indicate the more stupendous miracles which Jesus wrought, in raising the dead, such as Lazarus, and the widow's son, and the ruler's daughter. But, from what follows, I think it more probable he referred to the spiritual blessings he was commissioned to bestow. As if he had said,—you reprove me for healing the sick on the sabbath; I tell you that, in doing good on that day, I imitate my Father who doeth good continually. I perform such acts of mercy by his commandment and power, and according to his will; and he hath empowered me to do greater things than to heal bodily maladies; for he hath manifested to me his will, that spiritual diseases also shall be healed, and the human soul delivered from sinfulness. This work, also, he hath committed to my hands; and the hour is approaching, yea it has come, when the slumbering world shall be aroused by my voice, and they who hear and believe shall pass from death unto life. They who believe not must abide the consequences of unbelief; but they who believe shall at once obtain a foretaste of everlasting life. See the succeeding notes.

21. *For as the Father raiseth up, &c.* The raising, or quickening, mentioned in this verse, seems to be the same to which the apostle refers in Eph. ii. 1—6; namely, a spiritual resurrection, or quickening to newness of life.

22. *The Father judgeth no man.* Yet it appears by ver. 45, that the Fa-

22 For the Father judgeth no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son :

23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not

ther is the supreme Judge. The meaning of the verse is, that the Father hath appointed the Son to execute judgment in the gospel dispensation, called "the kingdom of God." ¶ *Committed all judgment unto the Son.* Our Lord sometimes speaks of the terrible calamity about to befall the Jewish nation, as a judgment executed by his ministry. But the reference here seems rather to the general results of faith and unbelief, virtue and vice, during the progress of his reign. Paul speaks of the same reign and the judicial power of our Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 24—23; declaring that God hath subjected all things except himself to the dominion of Jesus, who shall reign until he hath put all things under his feet, and reduced all to a state of willing subjection to his authority; when he himself shall in like manner become subject to the Father, having delivered up the kingdom to him, that God may be all in all. The same kingdom, with its purpose and glorious termination, is also alluded to, in John xvii. 2; Acts v. 31; Phil. ii. 9—11. In this kingdom, Jesus is to reign and judge, until the purpose for which it was established shall be fully accomplished, all opposition overcome, and everlasting life enjoyed by the whole number subjected to his power. The manner of the judgment is indicated in the succeeding verses.

23. *That all men should honor the Son, &c.* As God had constituted the Son his representative, his vicegerent, so to speak, had clothed him with authority, and endowed him with the divine energy, so that he became the visible manifestation of the Father's glory and person, he was surely entitled to all honor and respect. As disrespect to an earthly ambassador implies disrespect to the prince or government he represents, so *he that honoreth not the Son*, who was commissioned as the mediator between God and men, to communicate his will and execute his purposes, *honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.* The same principle is recognized in Matt. x. 40, where, it may

the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not

be observed, our Lord applies to his disciples and himself the same relation of this kind, as to himself and the Father. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." See also John xii. 44, 45. By this, may be sufficiently understood the sense in which our Lord represents honor or dishonor towards himself to attach equally to the Father.

24. In this verse, is announced one of the fundamental laws of the spiritual kingdom, whereof Jesus is constituted the head. ¶ *Heareth my word.* Hears the gospel which I communicate as the truth of God. ¶ *And believeth on him that sent me.* That is, believeth that God hath sent me, and therefore that my word is true. The belief here mentioned is not so much a belief in God's existence, as a belief that he sent his Son Jesus Christ into this world, with a message of salvation. Whoso cherishes this faith will readily admit the truth of the message, receive it into his heart, and cherish it. He will believe the word is true; and not only that it is the truth, but that it is God's truth, of the utmost importance to men. If he rightly understand the word spoken, and thus believe it, he will exercise the faith which is here represented as productive of everlasting life. ¶ *Hath everlasting life.* Not shall enjoy everlasting life in the future world; but he *hath* it. The believer immediately enters into the enjoyment of life. See note on John iii. 15. ¶ *Shall not come into condemnation.* That is, into the condemnation of them who remain in unbelief through their own fault. See notes on John iii. 18, 19, 36; v. 28, 29. ¶ *But is passed from death unto life.* Rather, *has passed*, the verb being in the perfect tense. The change of condition, here indicated, evidently takes place on the earth. Those who had believed, when Jesus uttered these words, had already passed from death unto life. By death, therefore, must be understood that deadness in trespasses and sins often mentioned by the apostles; and by life,

come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the

that spiritual life, which is mentioned by Jesus, John iii. 15, and frequently in this chapter, as resulting to believers, in the present state of existence. It may be equally true, that the same faith in the truth, and confidence in its Author, may sustain such life to all eternity; yet this is not the doctrine here taught. The death and the life, and the passage from one to the other, mentioned in this place, manifestly belong to the present state of being. "Has passed over from a state of spiritual death to the life of the Christian."

—*Burnes*. This evangelist uses the same terms in the same sense, in 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." The true faith works by love, and inspires affection towards men, by teaching that God is the Father of all, and that they are brethren.

25. *The hour*. The time. ¶ *Is coming, and now is*. The period has even now commenced. From the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of God has been preached, and men have been pressing into it, and obtaining life. Luke xvi. 16. ¶ *The dead*. See note on ver. 21. Dead in ignorance, trespasses, and sins. ¶ *Voice of the Son of God*. That is, the word, the testimony, the doctrine, of Jesus. ¶ *Shall live*. Shall pass from death unto life, as in ver. 24. The whole verse refers to the spiritual change or resurrection wrought in believers, by the power of the gospel, in this life. Or, if hearing the voice of the Son of God be understood not to include a belief in the Father, ver. 24, then *shall live* may denote no more than being roused from their former stupidity and deadness, as in ver. 29.

26—30. In these verses, we have substantially the same testimony, as in ver. 19—25, expressed in somewhat different terms. Our Lord assured his

Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they

hearers, that the change of which he had spoken, though it might seem marvellous in their eyes, was no more than should be wrought in all men; and that he had ample authority to accomplish the whole work effectually. The Father had imparted to him power to quicken the spiritually dead to newness of life, ver. 21, 26; and not only to confer this blessing on believers, but to impose on wilful unbelievers the just penalty of their unbelief, ver. 22, 27: see also John xv. 22, 24. The result of faith in the gospel is spiritual life; as a necessary consequence, men must remain in death so long as they remain in unbelief; yet the kingdom of God had even then commenced, under which all the spiritually dead should be aroused to spiritual life, ver. 24, 25, 28, 29. All this Jesus would accomplish in the name and by the authority of his Father; he was therefore entitled to be honored as the Father's representative, ver. 19, 20, 23, 30.

26. *As the Father hath life, &c.* God is the fountain of life, natural and spiritual; and he is able to bestow it on whom he will. This power was a part of the divine energy, which he imparted to his Son. Hence Jesus possessed full power to bestow that eternal or spiritual life which he announced as the result of faith. The meaning of this verse is very similar to ver. 21.

27. *Authority to execute judgment also, &c.* See note on ver. 22. Hence he will award a just recompense to men, according to their works, until all shall submit to his authority, and acknowledge him to be Lord. The reference may be particularly to faith and stubborn unbelief, ver. 29, as well as to good and evil generally.

28, 29. What is affirmed of the *dead*, in ver. 25, is here reaffirmed of *all the dead*, with an addition. ¶ *Marvel not at this*. Be not astonished at what I have already told you; because, as follows, I

that have done good, unto the res-

urrection of life; and they that are now in the graves, who at present sit in darkness and the shadow of death, the whole body of the Jewish people, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, summoning them to judgment; and being then at length all awakened to perceive who and what he is, shall come forth out of their present state of darkness and ignorance, to a new state of mind, to a resurrection, which, to those who have been obedient to the calls of Providence, shall issue in the preservation of their lives, amidst the calamities which shall overwhelm their country; to those who have refused to hearken to them, shall issue in their condemnation, to fall among them that fall, and to take their share in all the bitterness of the calamities that are hastening to involve this country. Matt. xxv. 1—13; Luke xiii. 25—30.—*Cappe*. This application may be just; but I have not perfect confidence in it.

Very many have understood this passage to denote a literal resurrection to immortality, followed by the endless happiness of some and the endless misery of others. It is allowed by them that *resurrection* sometimes denotes a spiritual change wrought on the earth, as in ver. 24; but, in this case, they insist that a literal resurrection must be understood. I apprehend, however, that neither of the reasons, urged in favor of this interpretation, is sound and conclusive. (1.) It is urged, that, by persons "in the graves," Jesus must have referred to the literally dead, and, consequently, to the resurrection to immortality. But similar phraseology occurs in Ezek. xxxvii. 11—14, where it is asserted, that the graves should be opened, and men should be brought up out of their graves, and made to live. But nobody supposes the prophet to mean a resurrection to immortality. The exclusive reference to a happy change in the temporal affairs of the Jews is so manifest, that none venture to dispute it. It follows, that the use of the word *graves*, by the evangelist, cannot prove that Jesus speaks of the immortal resurrection. Indeed, the use of this word justifies the opposite conclusion. I do not recollect that the *graves* are anywhere mentioned in connexion with the immortal *resurrection*. It is certain, that the two words are not

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have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

thus connected in any other place in the New Testament. A resurrection to immortality is never described as a resurrection from *mnēmeia*, (*μνημεία*,) the graves; but, whenever any adjunct of this kind is used, the phrase, almost invariably used, is *anastasis tōn nektrōn*, (*ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν*,) the resurrection of the dead. Since, then, a coming forth from the graves is used to denote a change in the temporal affairs of men, but never to denote a resurrection to immortality, (unless this text be a solitary exception,) we may properly conclude, that the word *graves* here, instead of proving that the immortal resurrection is intended, rather furnishes proof to the contrary. The case of resurrection recorded in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, is not an exception to the foregoing remark, although it might seem so, in its English dress. Although the word there rendered *graves* is the same which is here used by John, the *arising*, (*ἐγερθεῖ*, *ὑγερθη*,) and *coming forth*, (*ἐξεληθόντες*, *ἐξεληθόντες*,) are expressed by terms very different from that here rendered *resurrection*. And the word *egress*, (*ἐγρεσιν*,) which Matthew uses to denote the resurrection, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and is very different from that which occurs here. (2.) It is urged that, as Jesus describes a separate retribution to them who have done good and them who have done evil, he must refer to an immortal resurrection; inasmuch as no corresponding retribution is administered on the earth. It is not true, however, that such a retribution is exclusively confined to the future life. Whether or not a retribution be there and then administered, it is certain that Jesus announced his intention to reward the virtuous and punish the vicious, even in the present life. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works; verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Hence it appears that the resurrection mentioned here by John need not be regarded as an introduction to immortality, merely because a retribution for good and evil is connected

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and

with it. Indeed, this very fact justifies the opposite conclusion. There is not a single instance in the New Testament, besides the one now under consideration, in which a *resurrection* and a *retribution* for good and evil, are mentioned in connexion. Take, for example, Luke xx. 35, 36, and 1 Cor. xv. 42—57, where the resurrection to immortality is confessedly described, but no reference whatever to a retribution; and the same holds true in respect to every passage where this resurrection is mentioned. On the other hand, take Matthew xvi. 27, 28, and xxv. 31—46, and Mark xvi. 16, where a retribution for good and evil is announced, but no reference whatever to a resurrection to immortality. And the same holds true in regard to all other passages which describe a retribution. Whenever the sacred writers mention a retribution, they are silent in regard to a resurrection; and whenever they mention a resurrection to immortality, they are silent in regard to a retribution. The circumstance, therefore, that John here mentions a retribution for good and evil, instead of proving that he intended to describe a resurrection to immortality, in fact furnishes proof to the contrary; for nowhere else, in the New Testament, are these two subjects thus associated. If we interpret this passage, therefore, to mean a resurrection of mankind from natural death to immortality, some to happiness and some to misery, we must do so in defiance of the invariable usage of the New Testament writers; and must suppose that John here joined together those subjects which all the others, and himself too at all other times, were very careful to keep asunder. The interpretation which many have given to this passage is thus shown to be false, by the very facts on which they chiefly rely for its confirmation; and the interpretation given in the foregoing notes is not only consistent with the facts urged against it, but is actually confirmed by those very facts. The substance of this argument I have elsewhere published, but think it not improper to insert it here.

30. *I can of mine own self do nothing, &c.* Jesus here announces that, in thus executing judgment, he acted by

my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 ¶ There is another that bear-

delegated authority; nevertheless, his judgment was both accurate and righteous, because he was guided by divine wisdom, and in all respects rendered judgment in conformity to the will of the Father who sent him. The meaning is similar to that of ver. 20.

31. *If I bear witness of myself.* Jesus did bear witness of himself, in the foregoing declaration of one great work which he was commissioned to perform. The whole passage, ver. 31—37, evidently requires us to understand this phrase as if he had said, if I alone bear witness of myself, or, if my testimony concerning myself were unsupported by anything beyond my own declaration. ¶ *My witness.* My testimony. ¶ *Is not true.* "The word true here means worthy of belief, or established by suitable evidence. See Matt. xxii. 16. 'We know that thou art true;' that is, worthy of confidence, sent from God. Luke xx. 21; John viii. 13, 17." —*Barnes*. The testimony of Jesus was true, and he knew it was true; yet he admitted that the Jews could not be required to believe it, unless supported by some other testimony; for their law required the testimony of at least two witnesses, in important matters, and it would be difficult to conceive a more important matter than the annunciation of authority to represent the Most High, and to reign over men and administer justice in his name. He therefore directed their attention to other evidence, by which his testimony was supported and confirmed,—that of John the Baptist, ver. 32—35, and that of a greater than John, ver. 36—38. And, as if all this might not remove their deep-rooted prejudice, he referred them, for further confirmation, to their own scriptures, in which they professed implicit confidence, ver. 39.

32. *There is another.* That is, John the Baptist. ¶ *Beareth witness of me.* John uniformly declared that the Messiah was at hand, as his successor; and, when Jesus appeared, pointed him out

eth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say,

as the individual. See Matt. iii. 2, 3, 11; Luke iii. 15, 16; John i. 19—27, 29—36. ¶ *And I know, &c.* I know its truth, though I rely not on that alone. See ver. 34. Some commentators understand our Lord to refer to his Father instead of John, as this other witness. But the interpretation I have given seems more natural and consistent with the cumulative character of the evidence to which he refers. See note on ver. 31. In this exposition agree Lightfoot, Whitby, Doddridge, and others.

33. *Ye sent unto John.* See John i. 19. Having heard what multitudes gathered, to hear John and receive baptism at his hands, the Jews sent a delegation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ascertain whether he were the Christ, which they suspected, or whether he were Elias, or one of the prophets; for they seem to have had no doubt that he was clothed with extraordinary authority. ¶ *He bare witness unto the truth.* He disavowed all pretensions to the Messiahship, but announced himself as the herald of Christ, according to the prediction of the prophet Isaiah. Moreover, he assured them that the Messiah was even then among them, though not yet openly manifested. And when Jesus had been baptized, and indicated as the Messiah by a visible token from heaven, John bare witness openly to the truth, and pointed him out as the Lamb of God and the Saviour of the world. John i. 20—36. To this testimony Jesus called the attention of the Jews, as strongly confirming his own, thus showing them that the alleged fact was proven by a legal number of living witnesses. He affirmed, moreover, that they could not discredit the testimony of John, for they: an already admitted him to be a prophet, ver. 35.

34. *I receive not testimony from man.* He would have them distinctly understand, that he did not rely on mere human testimony, in proof of his Messiahship. Although that testimony was legal, and ought to be convincing, and

that ye might be saved.

35 He was a burning and a shining light : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 ¶ But I have greater witness

although he positively knew its truth, yet he had even more decisive evidence, which he was willing to exhibit, and which he had already partly exhibited ; by which his character as the Messiah, the Son of God, was established and proved so clearly, that they who denied the fact had no excuse for their unbelief. ¶ *But these things I say, &c.* He referred to the testimony of John, because they had already admitted its authority by sending to him, John i. 19. Had they regarded him as unworthy of belief, they should not have desired his testimony. Having sought and obtained it, they should not have rejected it. Had they believed it, they would have acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, entered his kingdom, and become partakers of eternal life. They might even now obtain these advantages and be saved, if they would admit that testimony to be true. For this reason Jesus once more directed their attention to it ; not because he absolutely needed that testimony, to prove his Messiahship, but because it was such as they might properly receive, and indeed were bound to believe.

35. *He was a burning and a shining light.* Jesus enforced the testimony of John, by reminding the Jews that they formerly acknowledged him as a messenger of truth and a prophet of God. The phraseology employed was familiar to them. "He speaks according to the vulgar dialect of that nation, who were wont to call any person, famous for life or knowledge, 'a candle.' 'Shuah, (the father-in-law of Judah, Gen. xxxviii.,) was the candle or light of the place where he lived.' The gloss is, 'one of the most famous men in the city, enlightening their eyes.' Hence the title given to the Rabbins, 'the candle of the law ;' 'the lamp of light.'"—*Lightfoot*. A similar figure is used by Paul, Rom. ii. 19: 'Thou "art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness." ¶ *Ye were willing for a season, &c.* They gladly accepted John as a prophet, when he first appeared, and voluntarily and in great numbers flocked to his baptism.

than *that* of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

The ruling Pharisees voluntarily sent a deputation to him, that they might learn from his own mouth whether he were the Messiah, or his forerunner ; for one or the other they were confident he must be. They rejoiced in his light, or the truth he announced, when he proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah and the kingdom of God. But when they ascertained that Jesus did not assume the precise character which they supposed proper to the Messiah, that he neither flattered their pride, encouraged their ambition, nor lauded their formal righteousness, they both rejected him, and repudiated their former faith in John. This was true of the leading Pharisees, and of them who were here specially addressed ; though among the people were many who yet counted John as a prophet. Matt. xiv. 5.

36. *Greater witness.* More decisive testimony ; testimony of greater authority. Jesus here declares that, although the Jews rejected his own single testimony, which they might justly do if it were entirely unsupported by any other ; and although they persisted in rejecting it, even when sustained and confirmed by that of John, which they could not justly do ; he had even more convincing testimony, irresistible except by absolute stupidity or stubbornness. ¶ *The works, &c.* That is, the miracles which Jesus performed by the divine energy which dwelt in him. ¶ *Bear witness of me, &c.* Nicodemus candidly admitted the force of this testimony : "we know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. To this kind of testimony, Jesus always appealed with the utmost confidence. John x. 37, 38 ; xiv. 11. He represented this testimony as so plain, direct, and conclusive, that all who rejected it were utterly inexcusable. John xv. 22—25. It was the best evidence which the nature of the case admitted. Even a voice from heaven would have been less conclusive ; for they might suspect some deception was practised. But the miracles which they witnessed were openly and publicly per-

37 And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word

formed, under circumstances admitting the closest scrutiny. And after the most careful examination, they could detect no imposition. They even acknowledged the fact. John xi. 47, 48. And as a desperate resort, to avoid the force of such testimony, they attributed his miracles to the agency of the devil, thus blaspheming the Holy Ghost. Matt. xii. 22—30; Mark iii. 22—30; Luke xi. 14, 15.

37. *The Father himself*—hath borne witness, &c. That is, by his power displayed in my works. These afforded such a visible manifestation of divine power, that God himself may be said to have spoken through them. According to a similar figure, the apostle says, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Rom. i. 20. If the existence of God is so plainly manifested in his ordinary works, that they are without excuse who fail to discern and glorify him, most certainly such extraordinary manifestations of power as were exhibited in the miracles of Jesus, might be regarded as a divine testimony that God had sent him. There may be a reference also to the audible annunciation from heaven of his sonship. Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. But, from what follows, I think the testimony of miracles is chiefly intended. ¶ *Ye have neither heard his voice, &c.* This clause has been variously interpreted. The most obvious meaning, in connexion with what precedes it, seems to be this: ye have neither regarded his voice, nor his testimony thus given, nor realized his presence and power displayed by the miracles I have performed among you in his name. That the word *voice* may bear this interpretation is perhaps sufficiently illustrated in the former part of this note. In regard to the word *eidos*, (εἶδος,) rendered *shape*, it is said to indicate an *appearance* or *manifestation*, rather than a definite shape or form. We

abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 ¶ Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

know that, even now, it is customary to say, we see God, or the hand of God, in remarkable providences; not that we see any visible shape, but we perceive convincing evidence of his presence and agency. Such seems to be the most natural meaning of the phrase used here. And such was the evidence which the Jews neither regarded nor realized, but rejected, though it was presented before their eyes.

38. *And ye have not his word abiding in you.* Our Lord seems here to refer to the predictions which the ancient prophets had uttered concerning him. The Jews admitted the prophecies to be the word of God, or language inspired by him. But they were not sufficiently mindful of the true import of what was written. Although the circumstances connected with the advent and ministry of Jesus corresponded with the predictions, the Jews would not acknowledge the resemblance. Therefore they believed not on him whom God had sent, because they did not regard the word anciently spoken concerning him by those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

39. *Search the scriptures.* That is, the books of the Old Testament; the New Testament was not written until a later period. This phrase has been variously interpreted. Some say it should be understood as a question, *do ye search?* some, that the verb is in the indicative mood, *ye do search;* while others say that the common translation is correct. It is admitted that the Greek is capable of either meaning. I see no necessity for departing from the common translation. The sense of this verse, in connexion with ver. 40, and in reference to the preceding discourse, seems to be this:—If ye will not give heed to my testimony, sustained by that of John, and confirmed by the miracles which I perform in the name of God, it is because ye do not properly regard the word of God, (ver. 33,) which has reference to me. *Search the scriptures;* examine them with



40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which

more care than before; give diligent heed to what they teach. You yourselves believe that they reveal the way of *eternal life*. I tell you they *testify of me*, as that Messiah through whom eternal life is to be communicated. But though you expect to find testimony concerning that life in the scriptures, and though they actually point me out as the medium of that life, yet *ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*. Search those scriptures, therefore, more diligently, that ye may discover their true import, acknowledge me as the Messiah, and receive the eternal life of which they testify. Thus, as it seems to me, did he seek to impress on their minds the fact, that, by denying his Messiahship, they not only disregarded the testimony of himself and John, and the divine testimony manifested in his miracles, but also disregarded the evidence furnished by their own scriptures; and that a more diligent and cautious examination of those scriptures might result in a removal of their ignorance and unbelief.

41, 42. *I receive not honor, &c.* It was not on his own account, that he desired them to acknowledge him as the Messiah; and he told them that he had not urged this matter because he desired their applause, but to convince them that they rejected him solely because they were destitute of love towards God and reverence for his authority; otherwise they would credit the testimony of his word and the manifestation of his power.

43. *In my Father's name.* Jesus uniformly declared that he was sent by the Father, and acted by his authority; in proof of which, he referred to his works. ¶ *In his own name.* Claiming to act upon his own authority. Some suppose the reference is to the false Christs, Matt. xxiv. 24; others,

receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his

to false teachers generally. ¶ *Ye will receive.* Ye will acknowledge and follow such a one, as a teacher, prophet, or Messiah, whichever character he may assume. The subsequent history of the Jews abundantly verifies this prediction. See Acts v. 36, 37; viii. 9, 10; xxi. 38. Josephus also speaks of several false prophets, who were thus received and followed. Ant., B. xviii., ch. iv., § 1, 2; B. xx., ch. v., § 1, and ch. viii., § 5, 6, 10; Wars, B. ii., ch. xiii. § 4, 5; B. vi., ch. v., § 2.

44. *How can ye believe, &c.* The secret spring of their unbelief is here touched. "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John xii. 43. They were ambitious and greedy of worldly honor. They expected a temporal Messiah, by whom such honor would be bestowed. They could not abide the idea of following the humble and self-denying Jesus. The leaders thus rejected him; and though the common people were favorably impressed, they were not willing to forfeit the good opinion of the leaders by a public and constant adherence to him. Thus the blind led the blind, and all were destroyed.

45, 46. *That I will accuse you, &c.* By this address, Jesus did not intimate that they ought not to be accused, or that he might not accuse them, on sufficient ground; but he gave them to understand that their case was inexcusable enough, without such accusation. They professed to reverence the authority of Moses; yet they did not credit his testimony concerning the Messiah; therefore he would accuse them of infidelity. ¶ *He wrote of me.* That is, he wrote of the Messiah, and I am that person. If ye believed his testimony, ye would believe in me. Gen. iii. 15; xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15—19. As ye have not believed his testimony and have rejected

writings, how shall ye believe my words?

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**FTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 ¶ When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove

me, though ye so confidently trust in him, he shall accuse you and make your guilt manifest. The idea is, not that Moses would personally accuse them, but that his testimony, which they had virtually rejected, might be regarded as perpetual evidence of their guilt.

47. *If ye believe not his writings, &c.* Ye profess the utmost reverence for Moses: if then your prejudices prevent you from believing what he has written, it is natural that ye should also reject my testimony. A similar form of expression is used, Luke xvi. 31, in reference to a similar fact.

The argument addressed to the Jews in this chapter was incontrovertible and overwhelming. Jesus, without asserting in so many words that he was the Messiah, proved the fact, by an appeal to the most conclusive testimony, and placed the unbelief of the Jews to the right account. It may well be believed that the conversation ended, as the evangelist dismisses it, without further reply by the Jews; for they could neither gainsay or resist the argument.

## CHAPTER VI.

1—14. The miracle here recorded is narrated also in Matt. xiv. 13—21; Mark vi. 32—44; Luke ix. 10—17. See the notes.

him: for he himself knew what he would do)

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are the among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. (Now there was much grass in the place.) So the men sat down in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set

1. *Went over the sea of Galilee.* See note on Matt. iv. 18. The region to which he went was "a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida." Luke ix. 10.

2. *A great multitude, &c.* Though the leaders of the Jews rejected Jesus, multitudes of the common people followed him, for a season, being strongly impressed with the idea that he was the Messiah. They could not resist the force of evidence furnished by his miracles, until they were wickedly persuaded that he wrought them by the agency of an evil spirit. Then, indeed, they joined in the murderous cry, *crucify him*. Sometimes he was followed for other reasons, ver. 26; but here, the evangelist asserts, it was *because they saw his miracles*.

3. *A feast of the Jews.* This is one of the explanations, so frequent in this evangelist, showing plainly that he wrote for the information of those who were not familiar with the ecclesiastical affairs of the Jews.

6. *To prove him.* To try him; to let him manifest the strength of his faith. The same word is often translated tempt. But it has not necessarily a bad sense, and has not here.

12, 13. *Fragments.* The portions of food which remained, after the wants

down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 ¶ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and

of the multitude had been supplied. See note on Matt. xiv. 20.

14. *That prophet, &c.* That is, the Messiah. Like Nicodemus, they were convinced that Jesus was a teacher from God, by the divine power manifested in his miracles. In this case, the quantity of food was miraculously augmented, or about five thousand men were made to believe they had eaten to fulness, ver. 12, when in fact they had scarcely received each a morsel of food. In either case, a miracle was manifest; and it had its proper effect.

15. *When Jesus therefore perceived, &c.* Either he perceived their secret intention, for he knew what was in man, John ii. 25, or their language indicated their intention, accompanied perhaps by active preparations to crown and proclaim him as king. The conduct of the Jews was natural. They believed the Messiah would be an earthly king. They believed Jesus was the Messiah. They were anxious he should immediately assume his true character. As

Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

he did not do it, they proposed to anticipate him, proclaim him at once, and thus secure the immediate benefits of his kingdom. His own apostles partook of the same belief and anxious desire, to the last; but were restrained from any violent outrage by the constant admonitions of their Master. They were not fully enlightened on this point, until his ascension. Acts i. 6.

16—21. See notes on Matt. xiv. 22—36. See also Mark vi. 45—56.

22. *Other side of the sea.* That is, the side opposite to that where Jesus landed; in other words, the place which he left, when he crossed the sea, or an arm of it; for it is doubtful whether he crossed the body of the sea on this occasion. See notes on Matt. xiv. 13, 23. ¶ *Jesus went not with his disciples.* He retired alone to a mountain, and engaged in prayer, after they departed. See ver. 15; Matt. xiv. 22, 23; Mark vi. 45, 46.

23. *There came other boats, &c.* This is mentioned to account for the fact,

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye

saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

that the people believed Jesus had gone to Capernaum, although, when his disciples departed, no boats were left at the place. They reasonably enough concluded that he had taken passage in some one of the boats which arrived in the night. ¶ *Tiberias*. A city built by Herod Antipas, near the sea of Galilee, and named in honor of Tiberius Cæsar.

24. *Took shipping*. Went on board the boats which had so recently arrived. ¶ *Came to Capernaum*. The city where Jesus had resided, and towards which they had seen his disciples direct their course, ver. 17.

25. *When camest, &c.* They manifested astonishment that he could have thus crossed the sea without being noticed. Perhaps they had inquired of those who came in the boats, and could not find that any boat had crossed towards Capernaum, except that in which the disciples went.

26. *Ye seek me, not because, &c.* Without answering their question, Jesus at once expostulated with them, showing that they were not in a fit condition to be benefited by a knowledge of his miraculous passage across the sea. They followed him, not so much because they witnessed the evidence of his Messiahship, ver. 14, as because they hoped for some temporal advantage from him. They thought more of the loaves, than of any spiritual blessings. This has long since passed into a proverb; and it is a melancholy truth, that many professed Christians seem more desirous of the loaves and fishes, than of that righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which Christianity is designed to impart. Rom. xiv. 17. They profess Christianity, for the honor, profit, or other temporal advantage,

which they hope thus to secure, rather than with a sincere desire for spiritual edification. To all such, the admonition of our Lord, in this and the succeeding verse, comes with a deep and solemn meaning, which it were well if they would understand and regard.

27. *Labor not for the meat, &c.* A common Hebraism, denoting, labor not so much for the meat which perisheth as for that which endureth. See notes on Matt. vi. 19, 20, 25. It is doubtless our duty to labor for perishable meat, or the food and raiment necessary to sustain life, so far as to make comfortable provision for ourselves and those who are committed to our charge by our heavenly Father. 2 Thess. iii. 8, 10; 1 Tim. v. 8. But this is not to be regarded as the great duty of life. We are to be even more desirous to obtain that spiritual nourishment which endures to everlasting life. ¶ *Shall give unto you*. Jesus gives eternal life, by making known the gospel of truth, in which if a man believe, and trust in God, he shall pass from death unto life. John iii. 15; v. 24. Such is the *life* here indicated. ¶ *Sealed*. Pronounced true, or approved. That is, God had authenticated the mission of Jesus, "by miracles, and wonders, and signs." Acts ii. 22.

28. *What shall we do, &c.* They had crossed the water with improper motives, which Jesus had exposed. They seem to have been convinced of their fault and desirous to amend. The inquiry bears marks of good faith. ¶ *The works of God*. Or, works acceptable to God. "They sincerely desired to be taught the way of life. Yet it is observable that they expected to find that way, as other sinners commonly do, by their *works*. The idea of doing some

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in

thing to *merit* salvation is one of the last that the anxious sinner ever surrenders."—*Barnes*.

29. *Believe on him, &c.* Our Lord replied, that what God required, or what was acceptable to him, was that they should believe on his Son. By believing on him in sincerity as the representative of God, they would be induced to hear and treasure up in their hearts the divine truths he taught, through whose blessed influence they should be purified from sin and made fruitful in righteousness. Good works are the natural result of that faith which gives eternal life; and hence faith is so often enforced as a paramount duty.

30. *What sign, &c.* It is surprising, that they should ask for a sign, when they had so recently witnessed the miracle, narrated ver. 5—14. Some suppose the demand was made by other Jews, who did not witness the miracle in the desert, but were present at Capernaum. Or, we may suppose that these, like the Jews generally, were expecting some sign from heaven, to identify the Messiah; so that, although they had seen other miracles, they demanded one of this peculiar kind, before they would exercise full and perfect faith in him. See notes on Matt. xii. 33, 39; Luke xi. 16, 29—32.

31. *Our fathers.* The reference is to those Jews who came out of Egypt with Moses, and fell in the wilderness during the forty years' pilgrimage. ¶ *Did eat manna.* See Exo. ch. xvi. This substance was altogether different from the resinous drug, bearing the same name, now used as a medicine. ¶ *As it is written.* See Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25, which seems here referred to. "Their argument seems to be this: the miracle of manna was a great one; it was a sign from heaven, from whence the bread was given to our fathers. Can you show us a miracle of so excellent a nature? If not, why should we

the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

embrace your new doctrine?"—*Pearce*. Some suppose they expected a sign, not only from a similar source, but of a similar character; namely, that their temporal wants should be miraculously supplied, and the richest luxuries granted, by the Messiah. "Many affirm, that the hope of Israel is, that Messiah shall come, and raise the dead; and they shall be gathered together in the garden of Eden, and shall eat and drink, and satiate themselves all the days of the world;—and that there are houses built of all precious stones, beds of silk, and rivers flowing with wine and spicy oil."—"He made manna to descend for them, in which were all manner of tastes; and every Israelite found in it what his palate was chiefly pleased with. If he desired fat in it, he had it. In it, the young men tasted bread; the old men, honey; and the children, oil."—*Lightfoot*.

32. *Moses gave you not, &c.* The reply is to the meaning rather than the language of the Jews. As the manna was given, under the ministry of Moses, it was rightfully regarded as an attestation of his divine appointment. But the Jews had long been accustomed to speak of it as given by Moses. Our Lord declared that such was not the fact. It was not even given through his intervention, as the miracles of Jesus were performed. It was bestowed, not mediately through another, but immediately by God himself. Hence the manifestation of divine energy through the person of Jesus was more direct evidence of his divine appointment, than was afforded in the case of Moses, by the gift of manna. Others interpret the passage, as if the contrast was solely between the manna and the *true bread*, thus: Moses gave perishable food, not the true bread; but my Father giveth the true bread which endureth unto everlasting life, through me. Either interpretation makes good sense; but the

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me, shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.

former seems more consistent with the general scope of the passage.

33. *The bread of God.* The substantial food, which yields perpetual nourishment, and imparts everlasting life, ver. 27. ¶ *Is he, &c.* That is, the Messiah, ver. 35. ¶ *Giveth life, &c.* For this special purpose was Jesus sent, that he should give life to the world. See ver. 37—40 ; John iii. 16, 17 ; xvii. 2, 3 ; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

34. *Give us this bread.* Believing it valuable, they desired its bestowment. But they were assured, in reply, that they were not fitted to receive it, ver. 36. As it was to be received through faith, they could not enjoy it, while they remained in unbelief.

35. *I am the bread of life.* By a common figure, our Lord puts himself for his doctrine. The gospel furnishes that spiritual sustenance which is substantial, permanent, and satisfying. ¶ *He that cometh.* That is, acknowledges me as the Messiah. See ver. 37. ¶ *Shall never hunger—thirst.* See note on John iv. 14. This verse is an instance of what is called parallelism, common in Hebrew poetry ; in which substantially the same idea is repeated in different phraseology.

36. *I said unto you, &c.* See ver. 26, where the substance of this declaration is found. They had seen Jesus ; they had seen his miracles ; they were inclined to believe he was the Messiah ; yet their faith was not perfect ; they did not at all apprehend his true character ; they followed him for temporal gain, not for spiritual improvement. And their mistake and unbelief still remained, as appears from ver. 41, 42.

37. *All that the Father giveth me.* See note on Matt. i. 21. When "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," 1 John iv. 14, he gave him a general commission and general authority. He did not make any dis-

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will

unction ; but as he had created "of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth," so he gave all to his Son, even the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession ; and gave him power over all flesh, for the express purpose of enabling him to bestow on them eternal life. Ps. ii. 8 ; John iii. 35 ; xvii. 2 ; Acts xvii. 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. ¶ *Shall come to me.* "This is an expression denoting that they shall believe on him. To come to one, implies our need of help, our confidence that he can aid us, and our readiness to trust to him.—This expression also proves that men are not *compelled* to come to Christ. Though they who believe are *given* to him, and though his spirit works in them faith and repentance, yet they are made *willing* in the day of his power. Ps. cx. 3."—*Barnes*. This coming to Jesus is referred to by Paul, when he says that all shall acknowledge him to be Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11. ¶ *Him that cometh to me.* That is, every one that cometh, or any one of the whole number. ¶ *I will in no wise cast out.* Jesus will not reject a single soul, who acknowledges him to have been sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. He never rejected a sincere disciple on earth ; and now that he is exalted, he is equally faithful and ready to bless. Whoso acknowledges him as the image of God, believes his gospel, imbibes his spirit, imitates his example, and obeys his word, (and all this is implied in coming to him,) shall not be cast out ; but, here or hereafter, shall have life.

38. *I came down from heaven.* The most plain and obvious import of this language is, that Jesus existed in glory before he appeared on earth. See note on John iii. 13. ¶ *Not to do mine own will, &c.* It is not here intimated that

which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Jesus had a will opposite to his Father's, or that he was sent to accomplish a work in which he felt no interest. The language, to be sure, might admit such a construction; but it cannot be so understood consistently with the general character of our Lord, or with his express declarations. John iv. 34; x. 17, 18, 30, 36. The meaning is this: the ingathering and final security of all whom the Father hath given me is certain, because it does not depend entirely on my will or my exertions; God hath willed it, and sent me to accomplish it; he is greater than all, and none can pluck his children out of his hands.

39. *This is the Father's will.* His intention, his purpose, his determination. As the blessing here promised is according to the good pleasure of God, which he purposed in himself and sent his Son to execute, we need not fear any failure. Eph. i. 9, 10. ¶ *All which he hath given me.* See note on ver. 37. ¶ *I should lose nothing.* We are safe in the hands of him who came to execute the benevolent purpose of God. It is the Father's purpose that none of his children should be lost; and Jesus testifies, "my Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John x. 29. *But should raise it up, &c.* This is a promise of a future life. The Jews entertained the opinion, that the resurrection should take place at the consummation of the age, or at the appearance of the Messiah. "They looked, as hath been already said, for the resurrection of the dead, at the coming of the Messiah. Take one instance: 'R. Jeremiah said, When I die, bury me in my shirt, and with my shoes on, &c., that when Messiah comes, I may be ready dressed to meet him.'"—*Lightfoot.* See note on ver. 31. This period is frequently called the

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and

*last day in the scriptures.* Whether our Lord, by this phrase, intended a particular period, when all shall be raised simultaneously, or whether, it being then the last day, in the Jewish manner of speech, he intended that the resurrection was even then in progress, is a question on which very different opinions have been expressed. I shall elsewhere examine the subject, more at large; it is sufficient to remark, here, that the fact of a resurrection to immortality, at some time, is distinctly intimated.

40. *Every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him.* Seeing and hearing were not enough, unless faith were exercised. Uniformly, when Jesus speaks of everlasting life as the result of hearing the gospel, he includes *believing* as a necessary pre-requisite. Many had then heard him, who did not believe; they entered not into life, but remained in death and under condemnation, until they believed, or acknowledged the truth. ¶ *May have everlasting life.* This becomes the portion of believers immediately; they wait not for the blessing until they enter another state of existence; but as soon as they believe, they pass from death unto life, or from the influence of those principles which work death, to the influence of those principles which produce life. See notes on John iii. 15; v. 24. ¶ *I will raise him up at the last day.* See note on ver. 39. The meaning of the verse seems to be this: Not only is it certain that none shall be *lost*, and that all shall be raised at the last day; but those who believe my testimony shall immediately enter into life, and enjoy everlasting life, here, as the result of faith, and afterwards be raised, as before announced.

41, 42. The Jews were scandalized at the idea, that a person, whose origin they believed to be so humble and ob-

said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves

44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day.

scure, should profess to be able to bestow eternal life on men, here, through faith in himself, and raise them to the enjoyment of a future life. See notes on Matt. xiii. 53—58.

43, 44. Jesus rebukes the ill-founded murmuring of the Jews, and assures them that they ought to judge of him by the works which he was commissioned to perform, rather than by his outward appearance, or the rank of his supposed earthly relatives. ¶ *No man can come to me.* No man can truly believe in me, confide in me, imbibe my spirit, and thus attain the life which I communicate. ¶ *Except the Father—draw him.* “To be drawn of God can only signify to be persuaded and prevailed on so to do by the consideration of those mighty works which God had done to testify that Christ was the true Messiah, and that prophet which he had sent into the world ; to these Christ appeals as divine testimonies concerning him, by saying, the works which my Father hath given me to do bear witness of me, John x. 25 ; by the consideration of them he persuades others to believe in him, saying, believe me for the works’ sake, John xiv. 11 ; and upon this account he represents the unbelieving Jews as inexcusable, that he had done those works among them which never man did, John xv. 22, 24 ; and all those works are said to be recorded, that men might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and believing might have life through his name, John xx. 31 ; all which things must convince us that these things were sufficient to draw men to Christ. Whence he himself speaks thus, When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me, John xii. 32 ; namely, by the power of my resurrection, by which I shall so fully be demonstrated to be the Son of God, by the mission of the Holy Ghost to confirm my resurrection, and the truth of my doctrine, by signs and wonders, and powerful distributions of the Holy Ghost, sufficient to prevail with all men to believe in me ; though the event showed that all men were not

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that any man hath seen

actually drawn to him by these means.” — *Whitby.* The concluding sentence of the foregoing note I insert, to avoid even the appearance of mutilation. Having inserted it, an additional remark seems proper. It is admitted, of course, that all men were not drawn to Christ, while he remained on earth ; and, moreover, that all are not yet thus drawn. But are we therefore to conclude that his declaration was false, and that he will never draw all men to himself ? By no means. We may rather adopt the reasoning of the apostle, and conclude that the means shall ultimately be effectual, though the perfect result has not yet been manifested. See Heb. ii. 8 : “Thou hast put all things under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him : but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” If we apply this reasoning to the case in hand, we shall not doubt the fulfilment of the promise ; especially as it is here asserted, ver. 45, “they shall be all taught of God.” In drawing men to himself, the immediate agency of the divine spirit is not to be wholly excluded. But, from the connexion of our Lord’s discourse, he seems here to refer especially to the influence exerted on men by the manifestation of the divine energy in his miracles. As if he had said ; while you object to my supposed parentage and disregard my works, you must remain in unbelief ; for if the power of God, displayed in my works, do not influence you to believe on me, there remains no stronger evidence. You must be destitute of faith, until this evidence shall have its proper effect on your minds.

45. *It is written.* See Isa. liv. 13 ; Jer. xxxi. 34 ; Micah iv. 1—4. ¶ *They shall be all taught of God.* *To be taught of God* and *to be drawn to God* explain each other. God draws men to



the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which

himself, by making them acquainted with his character and spirit. Thus he drew some, in our Saviour's day, by the manifestation of his power and goodness in his miracles and in his declarations. He drew others, in the apostolic age, in like manner. He has drawn multitudes since, through faith in their testimony. He will finally draw all, according to his promise, by *teaching them all*, and by causing them to exercise faith in the truth revealed by his Son. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father.* This was added, lest they should understand him to speak of such instruction as teachers generally gave their pupils, face to face. They were not to expect this *direct* teaching. But they must be taught by the works of God's spirit, and the doctrines which his duly commissioned servants should be inspired to make known. Among these, Jesus himself was preëminent; for he alone had seen the Father, and been made acquainted with his whole purpose in regard to his children. ¶ *Save.* Except. ¶ *He which is of God.* That is, Jesus Christ. See John i. 18; iii. 13; xvii. 5.

47. See note on ver. 35; John iii. 15; v. 24.

48. *I am that bread of life.* See notes on ver. 32—35. The truth communicated by Jesus was the heavenly bread or spiritual manna, which would yield nourishment unto everlasting life.

49, 50. By contrasting the effects of the manna which fell in the wilderness and of the true bread from heaven, Jesus intimated that his mission was more glorious than that of Moses, and his instructions vastly more important. Manna sustained natural life for a season, only; but his truth should sustain spiritual life perpetually.

came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of

51. *Living bread.* Same as *bread of life*, ver. 35. ¶ *Live forever.* See ver. 33, 35. ¶ *My flesh.* Some commentators understand Jesus to speak of his literal body, and to refer to his crucifixion. But what follows, in ver. 53—57, 63, indicates rather that he used the word *flesh* in a figurative sense, to represent the substantial truth which he revealed to men, through faith in which they should enjoy life. Or, if the other interpretation be adopted, and Jesus be supposed to refer to the consummation of his ministry by the sacrifice of himself, sealing the truth of his doctrine with his own blood, it should not be forgotten that this also was designed for general benefit, to give *life to the world*; not any portion of it, to the exclusion of the remainder. 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 2.

52. The Jews misunderstood the language of Jesus, and it seemed to them as unreasonable that he should *give his flesh to be eaten*, as the new birth appeared to Nicodemus, John iii. 4. Many, in like manner, have been led astray from the truth by understanding literally the highly figurative language often employed in the scriptures. And though they have not, like the Jews, rejected the testimony altogether, they have so misunderstood it, that, while they supposed they were believing the gospel, they have in fact believed doctrines utterly inconsistent with its general spirit and the express declarations of the great Teacher.

53—55. This passage contains substantially a repetition of what precedes it. ¶ *Eat the flesh*, &c. This is so manifestly figurative, that it would seem impossible to understand it otherwise. The Romanists, however, press this passage into the support of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the

man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drunk indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father:

Eucharist. "Because our Lord saith, *except you eat, &c.*, let us so communicate that we nothing doubt of the truth of Christ's body and blood; for that is received with mouth which is believed in heart."—*Rhem. Test.* But this interpretation is altogether strained and forced. "What sense did they take it in, that did understand it? Not in a sacramental sense, surely, unless they were then instructed in the death and passion of our Saviour; for the sacrament hath a relation to his death; but it sufficiently appears elsewhere, that they knew or expected nothing of that. Much less did they take it in a Jewish sense; for the Jewish conceits were about the mighty advantages that should accrue to them from the Messiah, and those merely earthly and sensual. But to partake of the Messiah truly, is to partake of himself, his pure nature, his righteousness, his spirit; and to live, and grow, and receive nourishment from that participation of him. Things which the Jewish schools heard little of, did not believe, did not think; but things which our blessed Saviour expresseth lively and comprehensively enough, by that of eating his flesh and drinking his blood."—*Lightfoot.* ¶ *Meat—drink indeed.* Truly substantial, and nourishing. But this *meat* and *drink* seems intended to express his doctrine, ver. 13.

56. *Dwelleth in me, &c.* When men resemble Christ they are said to dwell in him, and to dwell in God, whose representative he is. John says, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Again, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" 1 John iv. 12, 15 And

so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who

our Saviour prayed to the Father concerning his disciples, "That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21. The idea is, that there is a close moral resemblance; the same which is expressed by being the children of our heavenly Father, Matt. v. 44—48. Whosoever embraces the doctrines of Christ, yields obedience to them, and is thus conformed to his moral image, dwells in Christ. And hence the apostle says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. The converse of which is true; If any man be a new creature, in other words, if his heart and life be brought under the influence of the gospel, he is in Christ.

57. *I live by the Father, &c.* The meaning of this verse is similar to that of John v. 26. As the Father imparted energy and spiritual life to his Son, so the Son is empowered to bestow a similar blessing upon his disciples.

58. See notes on ver. 32, 33.

59. The foregoing discourse was delivered openly in the synagogue, probably to a multitude; for doubtless many of the inhabitants of the city were present, in addition to them who followed Jesus across the sea, ver. 22—24. He gladly embraced every opportunity for doing good, and therefore frequented the synagogues, where the people were accustomed to congregate.

60. *Disciples.* Learners. The word does not here denote the Twelve, nor necessarily any who had become firm believers in the word of the gospel; but it indicates those who had attended on the ministry of Jesus, with particular reference, perhaps, to such as were par-

can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

ly convinced of his Messiahship, by his miracles, and almost persuaded to be Christians. ¶ *Hard saying.* Some interpret this to mean an offensive, disagreeable doctrine; and the remainder of the verse,—who can patiently abide such teaching? Others, with more probability, understand by it a difficult, incomprehensible doctrine; and the succeeding question,—who can understand it? who can believe that his flesh is to be eaten and his blood swallowed? Their difficulty consisted in understanding him literally instead of figuratively. This seems the more probable, because the exclamation was not made by his violent enemies, but by those who seem to have been attentive, but not very teachable, learners or disciples.

61, 62. *What and if ye shall see, &c.* He did not say they should see, but only supposes a case. None but the apostles are known to have witnessed his ascension. Acts i. 1—12. But others were made acquainted with the fact, by their testimony. Different expositions have been given of this passage. Some understand it thus: Is it difficult for you to understand how you can eat my flesh and drink my blood, while I am with you? how then can you expect to understand it, when I shall have ascended into heaven, and my body shall be absent? Others, thus: Do you murmur, because I said I came down from heaven? how will it affect you to see me return thither? Either yields a good sense; but the former seems more consistent with the succeeding verse.

63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth.* Or, maketh alive, or giveth life. In this verse, our Lord explained his meaning in the foregoing discourse. As if he had said: You marvel at my language concerning the eating of my flesh and

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 ¶ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

drinking of my blood. But this has been spoken figuratively. My literal flesh would not profit you, if you should eat it. My words, or my doctrine, which I communicate in the name of my Father, they are spiritual and life-giving. If you embrace these, and thus receive me, or, as it were, feed upon me, you shall receive permanent and spiritual nourishment unto life. In this sense, his figurative language, describing himself, or rather his doctrine, as food, in contrast with the manna, ver. 31, becomes plain. It is indeed but an amplification of what he expressed in more brief terms, in John iii. 15, 18; v. 24.

64. *Believe not.* And were therefore destitute of that life which resulted from faith in his doctrine. ¶ *Knew from the beginning, &c.* See note on John ii. 25. He knew his own; he knew also his enemies, and the very person who would betray him. See ver. 71.

65. *Therefore.* That is, because some of you do not believe. ¶ *I said unto you, &c.* See note on ver. 44.

66. *Many of his disciples.* Many who had followed him, and listened to his instructions. The term does not necessarily mean believers, though such is its frequent meaning. ¶ *Went back.* This may mean, returned to their homes; or, as becoming learners or disciples of Christ is termed *following him*, so forsaking him may be understood by *going back*. They had followed him with an unworthy purpose, ver. 26. They sought temporal advantages, such as were generally expected of the Messiah. They were disappointed. They had no relish for his spiritual truth. They heeded not the divine testimony, yielded by his miracles. They therefore forsook him, and return-

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot

ed to the beggarly elements of the world. In this case, as in a mirror, may many behold their own conduct, who have sought temporal rather than spiritual good, by an ostensible discipleship; and, being disappointed, have abandoned their profession.

67. *Will ye also go away?* This was an affecting question. It appealed to their hearts. Having witnessed my miracles, and already tasted the good word of the kingdom, will ye follow the multitude, and also go away?

68. *Simon Peter answered.* This apostle generally answered for all. His sanguine temperament rendered it difficult for him to wait for others to speak. ¶ *To whom shall we go?* "It is one of Peter's noble confessions, the instinctive promptings of a pious heart, and of ardent love. There was no one else who could teach them. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes, were corrupt, and unable to guide them aright; and though the doctrine of Jesus were mysterious, yet they were the only doctrines that could guide and save them."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Thou hast the words of eternal life.* This is an acknowledgment that they believed the testimony in ver. 35, 63; that Jesus understood and taught the doctrine of truth, which yielded and nourished spiritual life.

69. *We are sure.* Literally, *we know or have known*. See notes on Matt. xvi. 16. It may be observed that Peter styles Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, not the supreme God; and it is not intimated that he ascribed to him a wrong character, one below his actual dignity.

70. *You twelve.* John does not particularly narrate the calling of the twelve. See Matt. x. 1–4; Mark iii.

*the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.*

## CHAPTER VII.

**A**FTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

14–19; Luke vi. 13–16. The number, however, seems to have been completed, when these words were addressed to them. ¶ *One of you is a devil.* Or an *accuser*, or *adversary*, as the word is rendered 1 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3. This is one of the cases in which *diabolos*, (διάβολος,) sometimes rendered *devil*, and generally supposed to denote the mightiest evil spirit, is applied to a human being. It indicates great depravity in Judas, to whom the epithet is applied. In like manner, Peter was admonished that his conduct was very unbecoming, when his Master called him Satan. Matt. xvi. 23.

71. *Judas Iscariot.* See note on Matt. x. 4. ¶ *For it was he, &c.* This is added by the evangelist in explanation of his Master's meaning. It does not appear that, at the time, he indicated which of the twelve he intended. From this reference to Judas, some have supposed the passover, mentioned ver. 4, was the one at which Jesus was betrayed. But this cannot easily be reconciled with ver. 1, 2, of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. *After these things.* That is, the events and conversation narrated in the preceding chapter. ¶ *Walked.* Dwelt, travelled, and taught. ¶ *Jewry.* Judea. Galilee was in the northern part of Palestine; Judea, in the southern; Samaria, between the two.

2. *Feast of tabernacles.* This was one of the three yearly feasts of the Jews, at which every adult male was bound to be present. It "was celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-third of the seventh month, namely Tisri;" [answering nearly to the first

3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For *there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.*

eight days in October.] "The twenty-third, or *eighth* day was the one which was more particularly distinguished as a festival, Lev. xxiii. 34—42; Numb. xxix. 12, 35; Deut. xvi. 13—15; Neh. viii. 18; 2 Macc. x. 6; John vii. 2, 37. It was instituted in memory of the journey through the Arabian wilderness. The Jews, therefore, during its continuance, dwelt in booths, as they did in their journey from Egypt, Lev. xxiii. 42, 43. It was also a festival of thanks in honor of the vintage and the gathering in of the fruits, and was therefore called the *feast of the gathering*, Exo. xxiii. 16; xxxiv. 22. The Hebrews, during this feast, carried about the fruits of the choicest trees,—also the branches of palms, willows, and other trees, that bore a thick foliage.—The feast of tabernacles was a season, which witnessed the most marked and decided indications of joy.—More public sacrifices were directed to be offered on this festival, than on the others, as will be seen by consulting Numb. xxix. 12—39."—*Jahn*.

3. *His brethren.* The sons of Joseph, and perhaps also of Mary. See notes on Matt. xii. 47; xiii. 55. The word sometimes means disciples, or near friends. It seems here rather to denote those who were regarded as near relatives by blood. ¶ *Thy disciples.* Referring to the disciples who had been convinced of his Messiahship, when he was before in Judea. This address of his brethren was probably intended as an expression of contempt and derision; for they did not believe in the divine mission of Jesus, ver. 5. ¶ *Works.* Miracles. It does not appear whether they considered his miracles to have been performed by superhuman power. It is certain, however, that they, as well as the Jews generally, were not convinced by them, but remained in unbelief. Indeed, the latter clause of ver. 4 may be understood to intimate that they had not personally witnessed any of these miracles.

If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 (For neither did his brethren believe in him.)

6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

4. *There is no man, &c.* Presuming that Jesus was ambitious to be known as a prophet, or intending to express a doubt whether he ever had performed a miracle, his brethren suggested a journey to Jerusalem. As if they had said: If you can perform miracles, go up to Jerusalem, and perform them publicly, that you may be known and acknowledged as a prophet. Do not remain in obscurity, pretending to do wonders in this remote province; you can never become known in this manner; but *if thou do these things*, if there be no deception or exaggeration in the affair, *show thyself to the world*, that the public may be enlightened and convinced.

5. *Neither did his brethren believe in him.* This accounts for their contemptuous language. Perhaps their unbelief was not their fault; for it does not appear that they had witnessed any of his miracles. Moreover, they had been intimate with him from his youth; and it is a well-known truth that men are unwilling to admit a familiar acquaintance to be vastly superior to mankind generally; just as men who live near the most interesting natural curiosities, mountains, cataracts, or caverns, are less sensible to their beauty or sublimity, than those who seldom enjoy the sight.

6. *My time is not yet come.* See note on John ii. 4. The meaning seems to be, my time for going to the feast is not yet come. The reason for the three or four days' delay is not assigned. It has been suggested as the probable reason, that he desired to avoid the appearance of parade and the consequent opposition and violence of the rulers, if he should go with the multitude, many of whom believed on him. On his final entry into Jerusalem—he was attended by such a multitude, and they hailed him as the promised deliverer; the result is well known, Matt. xxi. 1—11; Luke xix. 35—40. The rulers, driven to desperation by this display of popular feeling, first persuaded the peo-

7 The world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up yet unto this feast ; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 ¶ But when his brethren were

ple that he was an impostor, and then crucified him. At the time mentioned in the text, he had not fulfilled his ministry, and the time for its violent and bloody consummation had not yet come. ¶ *Your time is always ready.* It makes no difference when you go up to the feast, provided that, during its continuance, you present yourselves as by law required. Your appearance on the journey or in the city will produce no excitement, and will not disturb the public peace.

7. *The world cannot hate you.* By the *world* is here intended chiefly the Jewish rulers and people, who professed such supreme regard for the law and religion. It does not indicate publicans and sinners, those who were esteemed the refuse of society ; for this was not the class of men who most violently opposed our Lord. His most bitter enemies were those who made the highest pretensions to religion, in their way ; and so far as a rigid observance of forms and ceremonies went, they were perfect patterns of piety. Their fault was, that they performed their religious services to be seen of men, and had not the love of God in their hearts ; they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. The brethren of Jesus were not obnoxious to the hatred of this class of men ; they had done nothing to offend them. ¶ *But me it hateth, &c.* Their hatred is manifest, in every period of his ministry. And the reason is given ; he testified against their hypocrisy and ungodliness. He did not cloak over their sins nor excuse their iniquities. He dealt plainly with them ; exposed their true character ; and therefore they hated him, and crucified him. For a specimen of his testimony, See Matt. ch. xxiii.

8, 9. *I go not up yet unto this feast, &c.* He abode in Galilee three or four days after his brethren departed ; and

gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he ?

12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him : for some said, He is a good man : others said, Nay ; but he deceiveth the people.

thus avoided exciting any commotion or disturbance in the multitude, which flocked towards Jerusalem at the customary season. His *time had not fully come* for permitting a general movement among the people, ver. 6 ; and as he could not accompany the multitude, in their then excitable state, to Jerusalem, without some public manifestation of feeling, disagreeable and offensive to the rulers, his *time* for commencing his journey was necessarily delayed until after their departure.

10. *Went he also.* It is believed that Jesus rendered a perfect obedience to the Mosaic law, during his ministry, and attended all the feasts at which the whole male population was required to be present. ¶ *Not openly, but as it were in secret.* That is, without public parade and display. There was no design, on his part, to keep himself entirely concealed ; for immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem, he went into the temple, and there taught publicly. The only secrecy or privacy connected with this visit to Jerusalem was that which has already been noticed. He went not in company with the multitude, and avoided all parade and confusion.

11. *Jews sought him, &c.* Both his friends and his adversaries expected to see him at this feast, as he was so uniform in his attendance on the prescribed festivals. It would seem, from ver. 12, that both classes were engaged in the search, which at first was ineffectual, inasmuch as he did not arrive until about the middle of the feast.

12. *Much murmuring, &c.* The subject of murmuring, or contention, is immediately mentioned. The people differed in opinion concerning Jesus ; and the subject was discussed freely, occasioning more or less confusion in the multitude. Some insisted that he was a *deceiver*, causing the people to believe

13 Howbeit, no man spoke openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

14 ¶ Now, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, him to be the Messiah, or a prophet, while in fact he was neither; others, that he was a *good man*, assuming no authority or dignity which was not sufficiently confirmed by his works.

13. *No man spake openly, &c.* Some expositors confine the application of these words to the friends of Jesus, as though they hesitated to express their opinion openly or freely, while his enemies violently denounced him as an impostor. I prefer the opinion of Pearce: "Because the rulers would have been offended with what the former, mentioned in ver. 12, said, and the common people, with the saying of the latter, if they had heard them so speak." It should be remembered, that, while individuals dreaded the power of the rulers, the rulers had an equal dread of the people. And as the common people were inclined to receive Jesus as the Messiah, the rulers found it necessary to manage their murderous designs cautiously, even to the very last. See note on Matt. xxvi. 5. We may therefore understand the evangelist to say, that the friends of Jesus hesitated to speak their sentiments fully, through fear of the rulers, while the rulers and their associates did not think it prudent to denounce him openly and violently as an impostor, through fear of the people.

14. *About the midst of the feast.* As the feast continued eight days, this was probably the fourth or fifth. ¶ *The temple.* Not the holy place; for into this, Jesus could not be admitted, not being a priest under the law; but one of the courts, where public addresses and free conversation were allowed. See note on Matt. xxi. 12. ¶ *Taught.* Explained to the multitude, there assembled, the character of the work in which he was engaged, and the nature of his gospel. He was always ready to embrace a favorable opportunity of doing good. The result of his first address, at this time, is narrated in the following verses.

15. *Marvelled, saying, how knoweth, &c.* Our Lord had lived in seclusion,

ing, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, until recently. It was known that he had not received instruction from the authorized teachers. And the Jews were astonished at the extent of his knowledge and wisdom. It may not be improper to remark, here, that the means of acquiring knowledge were then much less ample than now. Common schools, the glory of our country, were entirely unknown. The rudiments of good learning could be obtained at few places only. And when it was known that Jesus had never enjoyed the advantage of any such public instruction, it was natural to conclude that he had not *learned letters*. The true secret of his power is explained by our Lord in the next verse. He spake always with authority, and not as the Pharisees and scribes, and the people marvelled at his power. Matt. vii. 29.

16. *My doctrine is not mine, &c.* That is, it is not so much mine as my Father's; it is not mine originally; it is that which the Father hath commissioned me to proclaim. See note on John vi. 38. As God sent him to preach this gospel, so he enabled him to enforce it with a wisdom which none could gainsay or resist, and with works which none could perform without divine assistance.

17. *If any man will do his will, &c.* This translation does not fully express the sense of the original. Campbell's version is better, though the phraseology is antiquated: "Whosoever is minded to do his will." Thus also Pearce says, "Rather, is minded to do his will, is ready and desirous to do it." The original is not equivalent to *if any man shall do his will*, which is the most natural construction of the common translation, nor does it express a mere willingness; but it means an earnest desire, a purpose, a determination. The word *thelō*, (ἐθέλω,) answering to *will*, (*if any man will*.) is the same which occurs in Matt. viii. 3, when Jesus announced his intention to heal the leper. ¶ *He shall know, &c.* This assurance has been variously interpreted. Some say, our Lord intended that if any one

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the

would thus resolve to obey the divine will, he should be further instructed and convinced that the doctrine taught by Jesus was consistent with that will. Others understand, that such a one should "have *evidence*, in the very attempt to do the will of God, of the truth of his doctrine."—*Barnes*. This seems the more reasonable exposition. Most certainly, the man who obeys the divine will, as taught by Jesus, knows by his own experience that the *doctrine* or teaching of Jesus is true ; for he enjoys in his own soul that peace, and joy, and eternal life, which is described as the certain result of obedience. In this manner, our Lord assured his hearers they might ascertain whether he delivered doctrines on the authority of God, or not.

18. *He that speaketh of himself, &c.* Jesus mentioned another fact, in proof that he was not a deceiver, but a messenger of truth. He appealed to a well-known fact, that any one *speaking of himself*, or teaching upon his own authority, sought glory for himself, and might be suspected of dishonesty. But he who always and expressly disclaimed all such glory, by ascribing the authorship of the doctrines to another, was not to be suspected of unrighteousness, or dishonesty. His conduct, in this respect, ascribing his own mission, his teaching, his miracles, all he did for the benefit of mankind, to the power and kindness of God, should have convinced them of his honesty and veracity.

19. *Did not Moses give you the law, &c.* Having appealed to his doctrine in proof of its truth, and to his own conduct in proof of his honesty and veracity, our Lord reminded his antagonists that their own conduct was far different from his. He strictly conformed to what he represented as the divine will. But they did not thus obey what they insisted were positive commandments of the Lord. They admitted that Mo-

law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law ? Why go ye about to kill me ?

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil : who goeth about to kill thee ?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

ses communicated the law by divine authority ; and they held that every man was bound to obey it. Yet they frequently violated its enactments, even in those points wherein they held that disobedience deserved the penalty of death ; as, for example, in performing labor on the sabbath. ¶ *Why go ye about to kill me ?* See ver. 23, and John v. 16, where it is declared that the Jews sought to slay Jesus, because he had healed the impotent man on the sabbath day. "The emphasis or force of this clause lies chiefly in the word *me* : why go ye about to kill *me* ; none of you all perform the law as you ought ; and yet your great design is to kill *me*, as a transgressor of it ; why *me*, and not others ?"—*Lightfoot*. This reference to the miracle of healing, and the consequent violent measures of the Jews, has induced some to suppose that this conversation was had during the same visit at Jerusalem when the miracle was performed. But an event of so much importance, and one which so highly exasperated them when it occurred, would not readily be forgotten by the Jews. They might well understand his meaning, when Jesus referred to their intention to destroy his life.

20. *The people answered, &c.* Possibly this was said by some who were really ignorant that the rulers had intended to destroy Jesus. But it is by no means improbable that the rulers themselves said it. For (1.) they were by no means scrupulous, in their regard for the truth, and would not hesitate to deny the fact, although the purpose was fully formed in their hearts ; and (2.) if Jesus referred to an event which occurred several months previously, it was very natural that such men should pretend not to understand his meaning. ¶ *Thou hast a devil.* Thou art mad, insane. See note at the beginning of Mark ch. v.

21. *I have done one work.* Our Lord



22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

press the matter upon the Jews, notwithstanding their denial of an intention to injure him. He referred to the particular case, when they were disposed to *slay him* for an alleged violation of the sabbath, John v. 16, though they were often guilty of even a greater violation, and for a less important purpose, ver. 19, 22, 23. ¶ *Marvel*. Or, are amazed; namely, that one should presume to heal on the sabbath-day.

22. *Therefore*. This word is by some interpreted as having the force of *moreover*, as nobody supposes that the law of circumcision was given *because* Jesus healed on the sabbath, or because the Jews marvelled at it. Others, and some of the most judicious critics, say the word belongs to the former verse. Thus Pearce renders the phrase, "on this account ye all marvel. Moses gave unto you," &c. And Campbell, "I have performed one action which surpriseth you all. Moses instituted," &c. ¶ *Not because it is of Moses*, &c. According to the common Jewish phraseology, Jesus said that circumcision was given by Moses; yet he guarded against misapprehension, by reminding the Jews that this rite was established and observed long before the days of Moses. The patriarch Abraham observed it; and was circumcised with his whole household. Gen. xvii. 9—14, 23—27. ¶ *Ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man*. The law required circumcision on the eighth day; and for the fulfilment of this precept, the Jews did not hesitate, if the eighth day were a sabbath, to perform a labor on that day, which by the terms of the law was forbidden. ¶ *Man*. The meaning is, a child, as in John xvi. 21.

23. *If a man*, &c. "If, by Moses' institution and allowance, it was lawful, for the advantage of the infant, to circumcise him on the sabbath-day,

24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 Howbeit, we know this man,

is it not warrantable, by Moses' law, for the advantage of a grown man, to heal him on the sabbath-day? If it be lawful to wound an infant by circumcision, surely it is equally if not much more lawful to heal a man by a word's speaking."—*Lightfoot*. See note on Matt. xii. 12. ¶ *Made a man every whit whole*. Entirely cured him; restored him to perfect soundness and health.

24. *According to appearance*. "Not as a thing first offers itself to you, without reflection or candor. In *appearance*, to circumcise a child on the sabbath might be a violation of the law. Yet you do it, and it is right. So to *appearance*, it might be a violation of the sabbath to heal a man. Yet it is right to do works of necessity and mercy."—*Barnes*. ¶ *Judge righteous judgment*. Judge rightly, according to the spirit of the law, and in reference to the purpose for which it was intended.

25, 26. *Is not this he*, &c. The people were astonished, not only at his wisdom, but at his boldness; they marvelled that he should dare thus to confront his adversaries openly. ¶ *Say nothing*, &c. His argument seems to have silenced his opposers; an effect which this argument uniformly produced. See Luke xiii. 14—17; xiv. 1—6. ¶ *Do the rulers know*, &c. The ecclesiastical rulers are chiefly referred to. As the rulers did not seize our Lord by violence, the people seem to have suspected they were convinced of his Messiahship; for they had before endeavored to destroy him, and he was now apparently within their reach. ¶ *Very Christ*. The true Messiah.

27. *Howbeit*. Nevertheless. The word is introductory to a fact which appeared to them inconsistent with their suspicion hinted in ver. 26. ¶ *Whence he is*. That is, his usual place of resi

whence he is : but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am : and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 But I know him ; for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

dence. ¶ *No man knoweth, &c.* It was the uniform expectation of the Jews that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. See Matt. ii. 4—6. But they had a tradition, that, after his birth, he should be in concealment for a season ; and when he should appear to accomplish his great work, none would know whence he came. There is an allusion to this tradition and a caution against being deceived by it, in Matt. xxiv. 23—26. " Their conceptions in this thing we have explained to us in Midras Schir. ' My beloved is like a roe or a young hart, Cant. ii. 9. A roe appears and is hid, appears and is hid again. So our first redeemer [Moses] appeared and was hid, and at length appeared again. So our latter redeemer [Messiah] shall be revealed to them, and shall be hid again from them ; and how long shall he be hid from them ? ' &c. A little after ; ' In the end of forty-five days, he shall be revealed again, and cause manna to descend amongst them.' See Bemidbar Rabba."—*Light-foot.*

23. *Ye both know me, &c.* You have had sufficient evidence of my character as a messenger from God. The miracles which I have performed in his name conclusively authenticate my mission. It was of little consequence whether they knew his usual dwelling-place or not ; the only material question was whether he came from God ; and on this point he had exhibited convincing evidence. John iii. 2. ¶ *I am not come, &c.* See notes on John iii. 33 ; vi. 38.

29. *I know him, &c.* See notes on John i. 18 ; iii. 13, 32 ; v. 36, 37.

30. *Sought to take him.* The friends of the rulers, exasperated at his assuming to possess superior knowledge of the scriptures and the divine will, and at what they understood to imply a claim to the Messiahship endeavored

30 Then they sought to take him : but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done ?

32 ¶ The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things

to seize him, that he might be punished for his sin. ¶ *His hour was not yet come.* His ministry was not fulfilled, and the time for his crucifixion had not arrived. Until that time, God preserved him against the plots, and wicked devices, and violent demonstrations, of his enemies. Thus does God protect his servants, and enable them to execute his designs among men. When John Murray was once stoned in a Boston pulpit, on account of his testifying that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, he scarcely uttered an hyperbole by exclaiming, to calm the apprehensions of his friends, " I am immortal, while he who called me into existence has any business for me to perform." I would not irreverently compare any mere man with the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet I apprehend a general truth is expressed in the text ; that God will uphold and protect all his servants against the stratagems and violence of their adversaries, so long as it pleases him to employ their ministry in the execution of his designs.

31. *Will he do more miracles.* Or, greater miracles. See note on Matt. xxi. 36, where the same comparison occurs. In either case, whether they referred to the number or the magnitude of miracles, they were disposed to believe that Jesus had exhibited satisfactory evidence of his Messiahship. It was the common expectation that the Messiah would perform miracles. They questioned whether more conclusive evidence could be expected or offered, than that which they had witnessed.

32. *The Pharisees.* Probably the Sanhedrim is here referred to. ¶ *People murmured, &c.* That is, that they discussed the question of his Messiahship openly, and many avowed their belief in him. ¶ *To take him.* To apprehend him ; that he might not make

concerning him : and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me : and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go,

more converts, and perhaps with a design to destroy his life.

33. *Yet a little while, &c.* Jesus here intimated that his ministry on earth had not yet ended, though its close was near. He clearly foresaw the tragical end ; and while his sensitive feelings were strongly moved at the prospect, his benevolent affections to mankind were not chilled, but he was ready to bless even his most deadly enemies. ¶ *I go unto him that sent me.* I return unto my Father. John vi. 62 ; xiv. 28.

34. *Ye shall seek me, &c.* The idea in this verse is somewhat similar to Matt. xxiii. 33, 39. The following exposition seems correct, and is quoted for an obvious reason. "This whole clause is to be understood as future, though the words *am* and *cannot* are both in the present tense. The meaning is, where I shall be, you will not be able to come. That is, he, the Messiah, would be in heaven ; and though they would earnestly desire his presence and aid to save the city and nation from the Romans, yet they would not be able to obtain it,—represented here by their not being able to come to him. This does not refer to their individual salvation, but to the deliverance of their nation. It is not true of individual sinners, that they seek Christ in a proper manner, and are not able to find him. But it was true of the Jewish nation, that they looked for the Messiah, and sought his coming to deliver them, but he did not do it."—Burnes. Again : "Rather, the time shall come, when your afflictions shall so increase, that ye shall desire, though too late, and in vain, that a prophet like me should arise among you, who should relieve you by his counsel and assistance."—

that we shall not find him ? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles ?

36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me : and where I am, thither ye cannot come ?

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as

*Calmet.* See Selections, sect. liii. When Jesus said, *Ye shall seek me*, his meaning was, ye shall seek the Messiah. He used this form of speech, because, although they persisted in rejecting him as the Messiah, he knew that such was his actual character. See John viii. 21 ; xiii. 33.

35, 36. *Dispersed among the Gentiles.* Namely, the Jewish people, who, for any cause, were dwelling among the Gentiles. The Jews, at that time, were found in many foreign lands. See Acts ii. 5. ¶ *Gentiles.* Literally, the Greeks. Perhaps *Gentiles* and *Greeks* were used synonymously by the Jews, because they were chiefly acquainted with those foreigners who spoke the Greek language. See Romans iii. 9 ; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. The people misunderstood Jesus, and supposed he intimated a departure to some remote region of the earth. ¶ *What manner of saying, &c.* They were perplexed. But Jesus did not fully explain his meaning, so far as the record shows. He explained it, however, to his disciples, John xvi. 16—18, 23, 29.

37, 38. *In the last day, that great day of the feast.* On this day was a "holy convocation" and a "solemn assembly." Lev. xxiii. 36. It is said to have been specially regarded by the Jews, because, on the preceding seven days, they offered sacrifices for all nations ; on this, for themselves alone. On this day, also, they performed a solemn ceremony at the pool of Siloam, which will be presently noticed. ¶ *If any man thirst, &c.* The meaning of this phrase is similar to John iv. 14. But it is supposed to have a peculiar force, in this place, from its connexion with a ceremony before alluded to. During that feast, a priest filled a silver

the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

40 ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

flagon with water at the pool of Siloam, and, carrying it into the city with much ceremony and the sounding of trumpets, poured it on the altar. "None could tell who instituted this rite, nor upon what occasion, nor well what it signified; only the Jews' records tell us, that some said it signified 'the pouring out of the Holy Ghost.' Now at night, after the water had been thus poured on the altar by day, the grantees of the people, the gravest, wisest, and of chiefest authority, met in one of the courts of the temple, and there, by torch light, danced, capered and sung, that you might have thought the men beside themselves. And this, they said, 'was the rejoicing for the pouring out of the water;' inasmuch that it grew into a common proverb, 'he that never saw the rejoicing for the pouring out of the water, never saw rejoicing in all his life.'"—"Let these words, then, of our Saviour be set in opposition to this rite and usage in the feast of tabernacles, of which we have been speaking: Have you such wonderful rejoicing at drawing a little water from Siloam? He that believes in me, whole rivers of living waters shall flow out of his own belly. Do you think the waters, mentioned in the prophets, do signify the law? they do, indeed, denote the Holy Spirit, which the Messiah will dispense to those that believe in him. And do you expect the Holy Spirit from the law, or from your rejoicing in the law? the Holy Spirit is of faith, and not of the law. Gal. iii. 2."—*Lightfoot*, (Works, vol. vi. 221, 222; xii. 311.) ¶ *As the scripture hath said.* There is considerable difficulty in ascertaining the exact reference here; perhaps Isa. lviii. 11, may be intended. ¶ *Living*

42 Hath not the scripture said That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 So there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, Never

*water.* Fountains and unfailing springs were so called. See notes on John iv. 10, 14.

39. *Of the Spirit.* The Holy Ghost. It was this, which believers should receive, through whose influence they were to be perpetually refreshed as with living water, their faith kept pure and ardent, their hearts purified from sinfulness, and their whole nature sanctified. ¶ *Was not yet given.* It had been given, without measure, to Jesus himself. John iii. 34. But it had not, to any considerable extent, been bestowed on his disciples. He promised this blessing, John xvi. 7—13; and it was copiously shed forth on them, Acts ii. 1—4. ¶ *Not yet glorified.* Not yet ascended to heaven, or into his former state of glory. John xii. 16; xvii. 5; Eph. iv. 10.

40—42. *The Prophet, &c.* There was a difference of opinion among the people; but there was a general impression, which extended even to the officers sent to apprehend him, ver. 45, 46, that Jesus was some remarkable personage. Some said it was *the Prophet*, that is Elijah, whom they expected as the forerunner of Christ; others, that it was the Messiah himself; others, doubting, suggested that the Messiah should come from Bethlehem, not from Galilee. See Matt. ii. 4—6; and ver. 52. They were not aware that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the veritable city of David, and of his seed, according to the scriptures. See Luke ii. 4—6.

44. See note on ver. 30.

45. *Then came the officers, &c.* That is, to the Pharisees, who sent them, ver. 32. It would seem that they approached Jesus, while he was speaking; and they were so deeply impressed by his

man spake like this man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?

discourse, that they could not lay violent hands on him. They had full power, physically and legally, so far as the will of the Sanhedrim is to be accounted legal, to seize him. But his moral power overawed them, and they felt that they were in the presence of a superior. They preferred to hazard a rebuke from their employers, rather than to touch the Lord's anointed with unholy hands.

46. *Never man spake, &c.* It was not through fear of the multitude, that they failed to execute their commission. They were restrained by a higher power. Their own consciences, excited by the spiritual truths they heard, testified against using any violence. The power displayed by Jesus, in attestation of his divine mission, was two-fold; in his works, and in his language. None could equal him, in either; none could resist the force of either, except through sheer wilfulness and stubbornness. The reason is obvious, and is expressly stated; both the works and the words were the result of the divine energy, bestowed by the Father.

47. *Are ye also deceived?* The Sanhedrim had resolved that Jesus was an impostor; and they represented that all his disciples were deceived by him. The only apparent reason for this summary judgment against him was the fact that he did not make them his chief confidants, and extol their piety, but on the other hand he exposed their hypocrisy, and denounced their ungodliness. With a slight variation, the language of John concerning Cain is equally applicable to them: Wherefore hated they him? because their own works were evil and his works were righteous. 1 John iii. 12. In the present case, they made no inquiry what Jesus had said or done, to produce such an effect on the officers; but sneeringly demanded to know if they also were deluded.

48, 49. *Have any of the rulers, &c.* They would have Jesus and his doctrine judged, not according to their intrinsic merits, but according to the standing of the disciples. In their view, it was

49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

sufficient that the fashionable world, the powerful, the proud, those who gave the tone to society, had not acknowledged Jesus nor embraced his gospel. ¶ *This people.* They entertained the most utter contempt for the common people. They sneered at their ignorance. These, the ignorant rabble,—for so they denominated and regarded all who had not been instructed by themselves,—were fit subjects to be deceived, and utterly incapable of discerning the truth or feeling its power. It happened, soon afterwards, that one of this ignorant class utterly confounded the wisdom of the wise, and mortified them even to madness. John ix. 24—34.

¶ *Cursed.* Execrable; contemptible; unworthy of consideration or regard. There have been many in all ages, and the race is not yet extinct, who have manifested a spirit kindred to that here exhibited. Loving the praise of men more than the praise of God, they have not examined the gospel candidly and honestly, but have been ready, at all times, to adopt any kind of belief which was popular among the rulers and dignitaries, and to reject any that was chiefly embraced by the more humble. They have been desirous to become connected with one or another church, not because it held the truth in greater purity, but because it was the resort of the rulers and the fashionable. Verily such persons have their reward; but it is such a reward as no well-instructed Christian, or man of true honor, or friend of integrity and straightforward honesty, would covet.

50, 51. *Nicodemus.* See John iii. 1. ¶ *One of them.* That is, a member of the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Doth our law judge, &c.* Or, condemn; which is the frequent meaning of the word used here. John iii. 17, 18. The law required that no man should be condemned without a fair trial. Deut. xix. 15—19. But the Sanhedrim had already condemned Jesus, without examination, and had apparently resolved on his destruction. Nicodemus seems to have been constitutionally timid. But on this occasion he summoned resolution enough to sug-

51 Doth our law judge *any* man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**J**ESUS went unto the mount of Olives:

gest that his associates were pursuing an improper course, which the law, for which they professed so much regard, would not justify. He was rebuked for his interference, ver. 52, and silenced. But it may be observed that, as he did not press the matter further, so neither was his first suggestion answered.

52. *Art thou also of Galilee?* A contemptuous expression; as if they had said, Art thou also a follower of this despicable Galilean? It manifests the weakness of a cause, when its advocates forsake argument, and resort to abuse. The Pharisees could not fairly answer the question of Nicodemus, without condemning themselves. They were too proud to acknowledge their own fault; and therefore they reproached and abused him. ¶ *Ariseth no prophet.* Some have found a difficulty, in reconciling this passage with the supposed fact that the prophet Jonah arose in Galilee. But, it should be remembered, the evangelist does not vouch the accuracy of the fact alleged, but only records the allegation itself, as made by the Pharisees; and, as Campbell shrewdly observes, "men, when their passions are inflamed, are not wont to be accurate in their expressions, or distinct in recollecting, on the sudden, things which make against them. This expression of the Pharisees, therefore, whom prejudice, pride, and envy, concurred in blinding, needs not appear so surprising to us."

53. *Every man went, &c.* The council broke up in confusion. Nothing definite was determined. Possibly some of the Sadducees united with Nicodemus, to mortify the Pharisees, whom they disliked. However this be, the council separated, without further action

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery: and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be

against Jesus; and he escaped their rage for this time.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1—11. This passage, including ver. 53 of the preceding chapter, is wanting in a number of manuscripts; and its genuineness is doubted by many critics. Campbell says that these verses "have been long read by the Greeks in their churches, are in most of the MSS. found with them at present; although in some of them they are marked with asterisks or daggers, to show that they are considered spurious. If they be an interpolation, they are a very ancient one, having been found in some copies before Origen. Some have represented them as having been transcribed from the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews; others have ascribed them to Papias, who flourished in the beginning of the second century. — There are some strong internal presumptions, as well as external, against the authenticity of the passage." On the other hand, Lightfoot, Whithy, Pearce and other critics, regard the passage as genuine, and argue that it was left out of some ancient copies, by accident or design, instead of being interpolated in others. I do not feel authorized to reject it; and therefore proceed with the exposition.

1. *Mount of Olives.* See note on Matt. xxi. 1. This was a favorite resort of our Lord; and he generally spent the night upon this delightful eminence, when visiting Jerusalem. See Luke xxi. 37.

2—4. *Early in the morning.* It was not unusual for him to appear early in the temple, to offer his devotions, and to teach the people. Compare Matt. xxi. 18, 23. ¶ *Sat down.* The usual

stoned : but what sayest thou ?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

posture of Jewish teachers, when addressing the people. They stood up to read the law ; they sat down to teach. See note on Matt. v. i. ¶ *Scribes and Pharisees brought, &c.* While thus engaged in teaching the people, the scribes and Pharisees approached him, probably with some confusion, bringing a violator of the law, whose guilt they alleged was manifest. For once, they seem to have spoken truth ; for the accused person did not deny the fact.

5. *Now Moses in the law — stoned.* It is hence concluded that this female was not married, but betrothed or espoused. It is provided, in Lev. xx. 10, that married persons, guilty of this heinous crime, "shall surely be put to death." But "the Masters of Traditions say, that 'wherever death is simply mentioned in the law' [that is, where the kind of death is not expressly prescribed,] 'there it is to be supposed no other than strangling.'"—*Lightfoot*. In Deut. xxii. 21, however, it is provided that if an unmarried but betrothed female shall be guilty of a like sin, they "shall stone her with stones, that she die." If this offender were of the latter class, as is generally supposed, then the Mosaic law was cited accurately, as denouncing death by stoning. ¶ *But what sayest thou ?* The object of the Jews, in this case, is very manifest. They were not moved by an honest desire for the execution of justice ; for if this had been their motive, they would have taken the offender to the proper tribunal, instead of presenting her to Jesus, who did not assume judicial authority. Moreover, from ver. 7—9, it is sufficiently obvious that they had no peculiar detestation of this crime. Their object was to ensnare our Lord, as in Matt. xxii. 15—22. They had prepared a case, where it seemed impossible for him to escape the snare. If he said, let her be stoned according to the law, then they could accuse him to the rulers, of assuming authority which did not belong to him, and, after their manner, convict him of disloyalty to the established government. If he said, let her

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, not be stoned, but let a milder punishment suffice or the penalty be remitted altogether, then they could accuse him to the people of disregarding the law of Moses, not only the law of the sabbath, but this also concerning adultery. And they would doubtless have been gratified, if to the epithets, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, Matt. xi. 19, they could have added another, still more disgraceful. Such was their plan. And they were determined he should not escape, by declining to answer their question ; for when he delayed replying, they pressed him earnestly, ver. 7. But that divine wisdom, which always guided him, enabled him to triumph over their artifice, and to overwhelm them with shame and confusion.

6. *Tempting him.* See the preceding note. ¶ *Stooped down, &c.* Many reasons for his assuming this posture have been suggested ; but they are altogether conjectural. That of *Lightfoot* is perhaps as ingenious as any : that his writing in the dust had allusion to the trial by ordeal, in which the dust was mingled in water, and sundry curses written in a book, and blotted out with the water, which the accused party was required to drink. See Numb. v. 11—31. But this, like others, rests on no better authority than conjecture. ¶ *The ground.* Rather, the pavement ; as this transaction was in the temple. He drew marks in the dust upon the pavement. ¶ *As though he heard them not.* This phrase is not in the received Greek text. It is found in a few MSS. ; but is not generally considered genuine.

7. *Continued asking him.* They persisted in requiring an answer. They imagined their plot was perfect, and that he could not escape. What a revulsion of feeling must they have experienced, when his answer was given ! "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong." Job v. 12, 13 ; 1 Cor. iii. 19 ¶ *He that is without sin, &c.* Common

and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up

tators almost unanimously agree that Jesus referred to the same kind of sin which is alleged against the woman. He thus exposed the hollowness of their pretensions of regard for the law and its strict observance, as in John vii. 19—23. See also Rom. ii. 1, 21—23. ¶ *Let him first cast a stone at her.* See note on Matt. xxi. 44. It was provided in the law, that, when death was inflicted by stoning, the first stone should be cast by the witnesses; after which the people were to assist in the execution. Deut. xiii. 9, 10; xvii. 6, 7. Agreeably to this provision, Jesus rendered judgment. As if he had said,—If any one of you will declare on your oath before God that this woman deserves death, if you can do this without also condemning yourself and pronouncing a like judgment against your own life, let him commence the execution of the law, according to the letter. Thus did Jesus preserve both his own integrity and the life of the woman, and at the same time administer a cutting rebuke to the hypocrites who surrounded him.

8. *He stooped down.* He had given the answer which they sought with so much pertinacity. That it might have its full effect, he remained silent, apparently engaged in writing.

9. *Convicted by their own conscience.* They knew their guilt. They were awed by the knowledge which Jesus appeared to possess of their characters. Their sense of shame was not utterly extinguished. They preferred to shrink away privately, even though this were a silent confession of guilt, rather than by any violent act give him occasion to proclaim their sins openly, and thus draw upon them the attention of the whole populace, to their shame and disgrace. ¶ *One by one, &c.* The manner of their retiring indicates the state of their minds. They felt mortified and humiliated. No one sought the face of another. There was no concert of action. But each endeavored to hide him-

himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers! hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

self from sight,—until the last one of all departed. ¶ *Alone.* That is, so far as those persons were concerned, who came in with the woman; they had every one gone. ¶ *In the midst.* Before this interruption, Jesus had been teaching the people. They probably fell back to make room for those who brought the woman. When these last had gone away, Jesus and the woman alone occupied this central space, still surrounded, however, by those who were previously listening to his instructions, and whom he again addressed, ver. 12. It may seem strange that *all* those persons who manifested such a holy horror against adultery should have been convicted by their consciences of the same crime. But it should be remembered that it is no uncommon thing for guilty persons, who imagine their sins are concealed, to be most loud and vociferous in their condemnation of those who are detected,—hoping, perhaps, thereby to avert suspicion from themselves. And, besides, that was a peculiarly wicked and adulterous generation. Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4. Josephus testifies the same fact.

10. *Hath no man condemned thee?* This is to be understood as *judicial condemnation*. Concerning the fact of her guilt, there was no dispute; it was admitted. To condemn, here, cannot therefore mean to adjudge guilty, but must indicate to pronounce sentence of death, or to execute that sentence.

11. *Neither do I condemn thee.* Condemn must here be understood as in ver. 10. Jesus did not thus pronounce the woman innocent. He did not say he regarded her as free from the charge alleged against her; for she had not denied the fact. He did not say the act charged and confessed was not sinful; for in the subsequent clause of this verse, he distinctly recognizes it as a sin. He only said, that, as her accusers had declined the responsibility of taking the matter from the legal tribu-



12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go: but ye cannot tell whence I

nal and pronouncing and executing the sentence of the law, so neither would he pronounce sentence or denounce legal punishment. ¶ *Go, and sin no more.* This exhortation was tender and solemn. He would not overwhelm her with reproaches or rebukes; at the same time, he distinctly indicated his judgment that she had committed sin. He exhorted her to refrain from sin in future, and live in purity and righteousness. What she had suffered, in thus having her life put in peril, might induce her to reform. Much more the mild yet searching language of the Lord. It may well be believed that she never again transgressed in like manner.

12. *I am the light of the world.* See notes on Matt. v. 14; John i. 7-9.

13. *Thou bearest record of thyself, &c.* See note on John v. 31.

14. *Though I bear record, &c.* Jesus declared that, although in matters of judicature, the testimony of two witnesses was required, and the single unsupported testimony of one ought not to be regarded, to the injury of any person whatever; yet, in his own particular case, his testimony ought to be received, because he absolutely knew the truth he affirmed. Or, perhaps rather, he declared that, even if his testimony were unsupported, he himself had positive knowledge of the facts asserted, while they could not know the contrary, and had no good reason to disbelieve.

15. *Ye judge after the flesh.* Ye judge according to appearances, not justly. John vii. 24. Ye judge not according to the force of evidence in regard to doctrines, but according to your prejudices and preconceived opinions. Or, if the word *krinō* (*κρίνω*), here rendered *judge*, be understood to mean

come, and whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man.

16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am one that bear witness of myself; and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him,

*condemn*, as it is translated in John iii. 17, the meaning will be, ye condemn, not on evidence of wrong, but according to your corrupt propensities. ¶ *I judge no man.* Or, I condemn no man. See note on John iii. 17.

16. *And yet if I judge, &c.* He declared that if he should judge, or condemn them, for their iniquities, not only would his judgment be free from the special impropriety which attended theirs, but it would necessarily be correct and righteous; for he would not decide upon a mere superficial view of the case, but would be guided by that divine wisdom which is infallible in its decisions.

17. *In your law, &c.* See Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15. ¶ *Two men.* If such testimony were sufficient, much more that of Jesus and his Father. ¶ *Is true.* Is to be believed; is sufficiently authenticated or established.

18. *I am one, &c.* Jesus offered himself as one witness. Although, in matters of judicature, he could not have testified in his own case, yet upon a question like that which was then in dispute between him and the Jews his testimony was valid. He had no sinister design; and they had the best evidence of that fact; for he was modest, unassuming, seeking not his own, but laboring constantly to promote the happiness of others. ¶ *The Father that sent me beareth witness of me.* That is, by an audible voice from heaven, and by the divine energy imparted to Jesus and manifested in miracles which no man could perform unless God were with him. Luke iii. 22; ix. 35. See notes on John v. 32-37.

19. *Where is thy Father?* The Jews must have known that, by the Fa-

Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on

ther, Jesus referred to God. They professed to have more accurate knowledge of God, than any other people. Their question must therefore be understood as contemptuous. They pretended to misunderstand him, as referring to an earthly father, and inquired where he was. ¶ *Ye neither know me, nor my Father.* Our Lord thus administered a just rebuke of their superciliousness. They prided themselves on their acquaintance with the divine character. He assured them they were ignorant on this subject. Although they knew the name of God, and had some general ideas concerning his government in the universe, yet they mistook entirely his character and his designs concerning mankind. ¶ *If ye had known me, &c.* That is, if they had recognized Jesus as a divine messenger, and believed his testimony, they would have acquired that knowledge of the divine character and purposes of which they were now destitute. He only was able to communicate that knowledge accurately; for he only, of all who ever spake in God's name, had dwelt in the Father's bosom and been made acquainted fully with his designs. John i. 18; iii. 12, 13.

20. *Treasury.* See notes on Matt. xxi. 12; Mark xii. 41. ¶ *His hour was not yet come.* See note on John vii. 30.

21. *I go my way, &c.* See notes on John vii. 33, 34. ¶ *Ye shall seek me.* The meaning of this verse is similar to that of John vii. 33, 34, with the addition, that the Jews should die in their sins. They would seek for the Messiah, whose coming they so confidently expected and passionately desired; which Messiah Jesus was, though they knew it not. But he would be beyond their reach,—he in heaven, and they on earth. This is not to be understood of seeking for spiritual salvation by individuals, but of desiring temporal deliverance from grievous calamities by the people in the aggregate. ¶ *Shall*

him, for his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

*die in your sins.* Some understand this to denote the national or political death which soon afterwards befell the Jews, on account of their sinfulness. To me it seems more probable that Jesus used the phrase *shall die* in its literal sense. I understand his argument thus: You are now sinful, and especially guilty of rejecting the Messiah, whose divine mission has been sufficiently authenticated: I shall soon depart from the earth; you will continue seeking for the Messiah, (for me, though you know it not,) but cannot come to him or find him, for he will be in heaven. In this hopeless search you will persist, and will die without having found or recognized him,—guilty of having rejected him when he was manifested to you, in addition to all your other sins. And such was the actual state of facts. The people, who are here addressed in their collective capacity, continued their unprofitable search, and at length not only died, remaining sinful, but perished in a signal manner,—more than a million of them having been destroyed at the siege and overthrow of their principal city. ¶ *Whither I go, ye cannot come.* Some have vainly fancied that Jesus here intended a final exclusion from his presence. But this interpretation is inadmissible; because, in John xiii. 33—36, Jesus repeated the same language to his disciples, making express reference to this passage; and when Peter desired an explanation, he said, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward.” Hence the incapacity must be understood, not as perpetual, but only as temporary. The real meaning of our Lord is sufficiently illustrated in the former part of this note, and in note on John vii. 34.

22. *Will he kill himself?* See note on John vii. 35. They seem here to have approached more nearly to the truth than on the former occasion. They then understood, or affected to under-

23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I

stand, that he purposed to depart from Judea into foreign countries; but now they evidently understood him to refer to a departure from the earth. But this meant they regarded as improbable soon to occur, as he was still young and in the enjoyment of perfect health. Hence their taunting, mocking question, will he kill himself? will he commit suicide, in order to place himself beyond our reach?

23. *Ye are from beneath; I am from above.* The earthly origin and corrupt passions of the Jews are here contrasted with the heavenly origin and spiritual character of Jesus. Their reference to *suicide* shows manifestly their determination not to interpret his language according to its true spiritual import, nor to receive him as a divine messenger from heaven. ¶ *Ye are of this world, &c.* Substantially the same idea repeated, in different phraseology.

24. *Therefore.* Because you are thus earthly minded and carnally disposed, because you will not understand the true character of my doctrine, the actual meaning of my language, nor the force of evidence arising from my miracles,—because you thus persist in remaining blind to my true character,—I said, *ye shall die in your sins.* See note on ver. 21. ¶ *That I am he.* That is, the Messiah.

25. *Who art thou?* This question seems to have been proposed, not for information, but contemptuously. Jesus had not said, in so many words, that he was the Messiah, though his meaning could scarcely be mistaken; but they professed not to understand him, and superciliously demanded to know who he was, that he should presume to lecture them upon matters of duty, and threaten retribution for their neglect to perform it. ¶ *Even the same, &c.* He

said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say, and to judge of you: but he that sent me, is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am

referred them, for an answer, to his uniform testimony. He had not been a double-dealer; but had constantly professed himself commissioned by the Father to communicate blessings to mankind. He had announced himself as the light of the world, the bread from heaven, or the bread of life, the Son of God, who was sent not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He had avoided a distinct and explicit announcement to the Jews that he was the Messiah, for prudential reasons; knowing that he could not thus so successfully accomplish his ministry as otherwise. See notes on Matt. viii. 4; ix. 30; xvi. 20. Ye by his language and works, he assumed so many characteristics of the Messiah, that blindness to the fact must have resulted from wilfulness or stupidity.

26. *To judge of you.* Or, to condemn in you. He was perfectly acquainted with their character. John ii. 25. And he saw much in them which deserved disapproval and condemnation. ¶ *He that sent me, &c.* The idea seems to be this: though I have not mentioned or condemned all your faults, yet be assured that, so far as I have spoken, my judgment is just; for I have been guided therein by that divine wisdom which cannot err, and have spoken the decision not of myself alone, but of my Father, who is just and true.

27. *They understood not, &c.* It was evident that they must by this time have understood that he referred to God as his Father; but they were in the condition described by the prophet; having eyes they saw not, and having ears they heard not, neither did understand. Isa. vi. 10.

28. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man.* That is, crucified him. John iii. 14; xii. 32. ¶ *Shall ye know.* Ye

*he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

shall have even more conclusive evidence; referring to the miraculous events attending his crucifixion, or his resurrection, or the manifestation of the Holy Ghost in the apostles. ¶ *That I am he.* The Messiah, as in ver. 24. ¶ *That I do nothing of myself, &c.* You shall then perceive that I have indeed done all things by that divine energy which the Father bestowed.

29. *Is with me.* He affords me constant aid by his spirit. ¶ *I do always, &c.* Jesus came not so much to do his own will as the will of his Father, and he delighted to execute that will. John iii. 16, 17; iv. 34; vi. 38, 39. And, being thus obedient and faithful, God was well pleased, and bestowed on him the highest honor. Luke ix. 35; Phil. ii. 8—11.

30. *Many believed.* Stiff-necked and rebellious as were the Jews generally, there were some, even on this occasion, who were overpowered by the force of our Lord's language, and believed on him as the Messiah. Doubtless, like others, they mistook his true character; yet they believed he was the one *that should come.* Luke vii. 19, 20.

31. *If ye continue, &c.* That is, if you remain steadfast in faith, listen to my instructions, and obey them. This is the true test of discipleship; it consists not in a mere profession of faith, or in the actual exercise of faith for a short period, which afterwards evaporates; not in distressing fears succeeded by rapturous joy, which subsequently becomes a mere matter of memory; but in a steadfast adherence to the gospel of Christ, and a constant desire and effort to learn his will and obey it. Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to higher perfection, the true disciple strives continually to attain a more perfect resemblance to his divine Master. Phil. iii. 13, 14.

32. *Ye shall know the truth.* See note on John vii. 17. ¶ *The truth shall*

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 ¶ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how say-

*make you free.* Or, deliver you, or save you. John xvii. 3, 17; 1 Tim. ii

4. The knowledge of the truth, that is of the gospel of grace and salvation, is frequently thus connected with the present salvation of men from the power of sin. Thus it is said to produce eternal life and deliverance from death and condemnation. John v. 24. Here it is described as making the believer free; that is, free from the power of sin, which is bondage. See Rom. vi. 16—23. "Religion is not slavery or oppression. It is true freedom. 'He alone is free whom the truth sets free, and all are slaves beside.' The service of God is freedom from degrading vices and carnal propensities; from the slavery of passion and inordinate desires. It is a cheerful and delightful surrender of ourselves to Him whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light."—*Barnes.* The true Christian feels himself to be a servant, to be sure, bound to obey the will of God. But obedience produces such constant happiness, that he regards it quite as much a privilege as a duty. It is a principal source of enjoyment. And he constantly rejoices in the liberty to do good; the liberty to love God and obey him, to love mankind and benefit them.

33. *They answered.* Not the believing Jews, but the unconverted scoffers who heard the declaration of Jesus. ¶ *We be Abraham's seed.* That is, the children or posterity of Abraham. The Jews prided themselves on their descent from this worthy patriarch, and claimed high privileges as their birthright. But they were degenerate plants from a noble stock. Had they resembled Abraham in character, their pride of affinity might have been excused. But they imitated neither his faith nor his practice; and they were assured that their claim to exclusive privileges was unfounded. See Matt. iii. 9; Rom. ix. 6—8. ¶ *Never in bondage.* They

est thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are Abra-

understood Jesus to speak of freedom from temporal bondage. Their declaration, in reply, was truly remarkable. The seed of Abraham were never in bondage to any man! Had they forgotten the long and grievous bondage, absolute slavery indeed, which was for centuries endured in Egypt? Had they forgotten the seventy years' captivity in Babylon? Were they insensible that, at that very moment, they were absolutely groaning under their bondage to the Romans, and impatiently awaiting the approach of a deliverer? Never in bondage! Thus unblushing is the effrontery of many besotted *slaves of vice*, who will not acknowledge their servitude, but will spurn the efforts of them who labor for their deliverance. See note on Matt. i. 17.

34. *Whosoever committeth sin*, &c. See Rom. vi. 16. Our Lord again corrected their misapprehension, and assured them he referred to the slavery of sin, not to political bondage.

35. *The servant abideth not*, &c. There seems a reference here to the implied claim of the Jews, ver. 33, that, as they were the seed or of the household of Abraham, they were entitled to privileges and immunities in perpetuity. They are told that although a true son might justly claim so much, servants could not; but they had become servants, by yielding themselves to sin. Their forfeiture of the privileges of sonship is referred to in ver. 39, 40. The particular point of our Lord's remark is stated perhaps with sufficient accuracy thus: "You, if you are disobedient and rebellious, may at any time be rejected from being the people of God, and be deprived of your peculiar privileges as a nation. You are in the condition of servants, and unless you are made *free* by the

ham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

gospel, and become entitled to the privilege of the sons of God, you will be cast off like an unfaithful slave. Compare Heb. iii. 5, 6."—*Barnes*.

36. *If the Son therefore shall make you free*, &c. That is, from the bondage of sin. See note on ver. 32.

37. *I know*, &c. I do not deny that you are descendants from Abraham, according to the flesh; but you are not therefore his children characteristically, ver. 39, nor entitled to special privileges. ¶ *But ye seek to kill me*. See John v. 16. ¶ *Because my word*, &c. My doctrine is repugnant to your corrupt dispositions, and you therefore reject it, and would gladly destroy me. In this appeared their degeneracy. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced, and was glad, ver. 56. But when these, who claimed to be his seed and representatives, saw it, they were filled with madness. Thus different were their dispositions from his; and so little ground had they for representing themselves to be his children.

38. *I speak*, &c. See John iii. 11—13. Here, as uniformly elsewhere, Jesus asserts in the most positive manner, that the language he uttered was not so much his own as his Father's; and, being the word or the inspiration of God, it was worthy of unhesitating belief. ¶ *Your father*. Probably meaning the same which is more fully expressed in ver. 44. The evil propensities of human nature are thus personified and called the *devil*, as the opposite religious principles are, by a similar figure, styled *Wisdom*. Prov. ch. viii. The idea is, that they were wholly under the dominion of evil passions and principles, or in bondage to sin.

39. *Abraham is our father*. As Jesus did not distinctly state to whom he re-

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God : this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your Father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication ; we have one Father, *even* God.

ferred, as their father, whose works they wrought, they returned to their former assertion that Abraham was their father, as if Jesus had either praised them or slandered him, by comparing their works with his. Or, as some think, they intended to denounce Jesus as guilty of falsehood, in attributing to them any other parentage, taking his language literally, not figuratively. ¶ *If ye were Abraham's children, &c.* He thus with sufficient plainness indicated the sense in which he used the word *children*. He referred not to kindred by blood, but to resemblance of moral character. See note on Matt. v. 45. If they were characteristically the children of Abraham, they would imitate his conduct. The direct contrast is exhibited in ver. 40. See Rom. vi. 6—8.

40. *Ye seek to kill me.* Ver. 37, and John v. 16. ¶ *A man that hath told you the truth, &c.* Jesus here calls himself a *man*, as he elsewhere calls himself the *Son of man*. But we are not thence to conclude that he was no more than an ordinary man ; for he immediately adds that the *truth* was communicated to him directly by God, as it was to no other person. See notes on John i. 18 ; iii. 11—13. This truth was so offensive to their carnal minds, that they both rejected it and persecuted the divine messenger. ¶ *This did not Abraham.* Abraham loved the truth and rejoiced in it ; and he manifested friendly feelings towards men. His settlement of the controversy between himself and Lot, or between their herdsmen, may serve as a specimen of his pacific disposition. See Gen. xiii. 7—9. And his readiness to receive the truth of God, trustingly and joyfully, may be seen in Gen. xv. 6 ; he yielded implicit credit to the divine word, though the blessing promised appeared to be beyond the bounds of human probability. Against hope he believed in hope. Rom. iv. 18. Compare Gal. iii. 6.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me : for I proceeded forth and came from God ; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech ? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

But these, who professed to be his children, rejected the truth which had nothing improbable in it, and which was attested by the most convincing proofs, and burned with savage rage against the messenger of the Most High. With such difference of character, they had no claim to be regarded as his genuine seed.

41. *The deeds of your father.* Jesus forbore to use the term so offensive Jewish ears. But he had described conduct utterly at variance with that of Abraham, and shown that they were not his children. By referring to a father, they must have understood him to mean one opposite to Abraham in character. ¶ *We be not born of fornication &c.* "That is, we have not only Abraham for our natural parent, but we are descended from Sarah, his legal wife ; the Ishmaelites were born of fornication, being Abraham's posterity by Hagar, the handmaid of Sarah : in the spiritual sense of father and son we are not a spurious (that is, an idolatrous) race because we acknowledge none for our spiritual father, and worship none as such, but the true God."—*Pearce*. The children of fornication, or an equivalent phrase, is sometimes used by the prophets to denote idolaters. Isa. lvii. 3—7 ; Hos. i. 2 ; ii. 4, 5.

42. *If God were your Father, &c.* Jesus now proceeded to still greater plainness of speech. He showed the Jews that they had even less reason to call themselves the children of God than the children of Abraham ; and, in ver. 44, told them plainly whose children they were, so far as moral resemblance was concerned. He assured them, that if they were truly the children of God, that is, if they had imbibed any portion of his spirit so as to resemble him in character, they would also love his Son whom He loved, and receive him as a messenger of grace.

43. *Why do ye not understand, &c.* His language, though figurative, was so

44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do : he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth ; because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh

much in conformity to their own manner of speech, and at the same time its application was so obvious, that Jesus expostulated with the Jews for their slowness to understand his meaning. ¶ *Can not hear my word.* He suggested the true reason of their failing to understand him. The word *hear*, in this place, seems to have the same meaning as in John vi. 60. Campbell translates, 'Because ye cannot bear my doctrine;' and remarks that the original "denotes frequently in scripture, and even in profane authors, not barely *to hear*, but *to hear patiently*; consequently, *not to hear* often means *not to bear*. The English verb *to hear* has sometimes, I acknowledge, the same meaning, but more rarely ; and in consequence of the uncommonness, the literal version has somewhat of an ambiguous appearance which the original has not."

44. *Ye are of your father the devil.* As the Jews appeared determined not to understand our Lord's language concerning their character, which, by several figures, he had described as corrupt and ungodly, and at length had the effrontery to style themselves the children of God and his sincere worshippers, he adopted another figure which they could not even pretend to misunderstand, and which excited their indignation, ver. 43. He assured them they were not the children of God, because they hated him whom God had clothed in his own image and sent into the world, ver. 42. And, adopting a common form of speech, he expressly told them they were children of the devil ; or that their works were so entirely evil, that they were manifestly under the dominion of those evil principles of which the devil was the personified embodiment. See note on ver. 38. "Jesus converses with the Jews upon their own principles respecting the devil, without either approving or disproving them."—*Livermore*. He no more vouched for the personal existence of such an evil being as the Jews considered the devil to be, than for the like

a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin ? And if I say the truth,

existence of the heathen god Mammon, Matt. vi. 24 ; he mentioned both in the ordinary manner of conversation. So also he called Peter, *Satan* ; and Judas he denominated *a devil* ; Matt. xvi. 23 ; John vi. 70. So certain women are exhorted not to be *devils*, 1 Tim. i. 11 ; Tit. ii. 3. In either case, including this, by being *devils*, or the *children of the devil*, is indicated merely wicked persons, under the influence of evil and corrupt dispositions. In like manner *wisdom* is said to have sent forth *her maidens*, Prov. ix. 3. No more strict personality is indicated in the one case than in the other. ¶ *The lusts, &c.* The characteristics of evil were manifest in the Jews ; two of those characteristics are specially noticed,—a murderous disposition and an utter disregard of truth. Both these had been recently exhibited ; they sought to kill Jesus, John v. 16, 18 ; and they constantly rejected his testimony to the truth. Such were some of the distinct marks of their bondage, their subjection to the influence of evil, the abstract idea of which had been embodied by the Jews and personified under the name *devil*.

45. *Because, &c.* Their entire sinfulness was evident, from their rejecting the message of Christ *because* it was true. Truth and falsehood have no affinity. They were lovers of falsehood, because it excused their sins. They hated the truth, because it condemned them. Thus was manifest the spirit of evil in their hearts.

46. *Convinceth me.* Rather convicteth me, for such is the force of the word here. Which of you can prove me guilty of sin ? By sin, however, is evidently intended falsehood. ¶ *Why do ye not believe me ?* The argument is here enforced. They had claimed to be of God, his children and worshippers. Jesus told them they were of a far different character. It was a natural characteristic of evil, to reject the truth ; and this they had done. He then demanded why they had not believed his testimony. Could they show its falsehood ?

why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

50 And I seek not mine own

glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?

He knew and they knew they could not. Why then reject it, unless they were vil?

47. *He that is of God, heareth God's words.* He assured them, if they were of God, as they professed to be, they would believe. Thus by a double argument, he proved that he had described their character aright. It was natural that the children of evil, or wicked men, should reject the truth; and this they had done. It was natural that the children of God, or virtuous men, should believe the truth of God, when communicated to them; but this they had not done. Hence the conclusion which follows. ¶ *Ye therefore hear them not, &c.* You do not believe, because you are not characteristically the children of God, but are under the dominion of evil.

48. *Say we not well.* Or, truly. ¶ *Thou art a Samaritan.* The Jews despised the Samaritans as an impure and mixed race, and hated them for many causes. See note on John iv. 9. To call a man a Samaritan was therefore an expression of contempt and reproach. ¶ *Hast a devil.* Rather, a demon. Thou art insane, or thou art prompted by a spirit of evil. See ver. 52, and note at the beginning of Mark, ch. v.

49. *I have not a devil.* I am not insane, as ye suppose, nor am I a sinner. ¶ *I honor my Father.* By proclaiming his word faithfully to a disobedient people, and by conforming in all respects to his will. ¶ *Ye do dishonor me.* By rejecting my testimony and seeking to kill me as an impostor. If they had properly appreciated his character, they would have acknowledged him as a faithful servant of the Most High.

50. *I seek not mine own glory.* Je-

sus came not in his own name; he declared that his doctrine was not exclusively his own; and by constantly attributing his mission, his doctrine, and the miracles by which both were confirmed, to God, as the original Author, he manifested a design to honor God rather than himself, and to cause men to glorify their Father in heaven. Matt. v. 16. ¶ *There is one, &c.* "That is, God, who seeketh my glory, and will judge you for your thus dishonoring me."—Pearce. With reference to his conduct on this and similar occasions, the apostle testifies that Jesus, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23.

51. *Never see death.* To see death, or to taste of death, is to die. See Matt. xvi. 28; Luke ii. 26; Heb. ii. 9. But the phrase is here used with reference to spiritual life and death, rather than natural, as in John v. 24; vi. 50, 51. Never to see death, or never to die, is equivalent to enjoying everlasting life; which, in the places here referred to, is announced as the result of faith and obedience. And the same idea is embraced in this passage.

52. *Hast a devil.* "Art deranged. Because he affirmed a thing which they supposed to be contrary to all experience, and to be impossible."—Barnes. They supposed, or pretended to suppose, that he referred to natural death; and because Abraham and the prophets, who were acknowledged to have been pious men, had all died, they alleged that Jesus was beside himself in saying that, if any would obey him, such should never die.

53. *Whom makest thou thyself?* ▲



and the prophets are dead : whom makest thou thyself ?

54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing : it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God.

55 Yet ye have not known him ; but I know him : and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you : but I know

question indicating the utmost contempt. Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead ; but you assert that your followers shall live forever. Who do you pretend to be ?

54. *If I honor myself, &c.* A sufficient answer to the question would have been, I am the Messiah whom you have long expected. But such a plain statement was inconsistent with his design, at that stage of his ministry. See note on ver. 25. The fact is intimated, however, in his reply, very plainly. If I should declare myself to be the Messiah, and claim honor as such, it would avail nothing, so long as my testimony was unsupported ; but my Father hath secured for me this honor, and hath demonstrated my Messiahship, by the works which he hath commissioned and enabled me to perform. It is He who inspires my words, and whose energy is displayed in my works, *of whom ye say, that he is your God.*

55. *Ye have not known him.* Though you claim him as your God and profess to be his worshippers, you know him not ; you are unacquainted with his true character ; else you would not reject me, his image and representative. ¶ *I know him.* See John i. 18 ; iii. 11—13.

56. *Your father Abraham.* This phrase is used in its natural sense. The Jews were truly descendants from Abraham, according to the flesh. Jesus said *your father*, rather than *our father Abraham*, partly in reference to their remark in ver. 53. And he referred to the faith of Abraham, because they professed so much confidence in him. ¶ *Rejoiced.* The original denotes an intensity of joy, which is not fully expressed in the translation. See Matt. v. 12, and 1 Pet. i. 8, iv. 13, where the same word occurs. It seems also to include the idea of strong desire. Hence Campbell renders it *longed*, and says its import is *desired earnestly, wished.* ¶ *And he*

him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

*saw it.* That is, he saw it by faith. It was revealed to him, that in his seed, which is Christ, all men should be blessed ; and he believed God, and was glad. Gen. xii. 3 ; Acts iii. 25 ; Gal. iii. 16—18 ; Heb. xi. 8—13.

57. *Not yet fifty years old.* Our Lord, at this time, was not probably more than thirty-three years old. But perhaps the Jews stated so large a number, in order to be certain that he could not contradict their assertion ;—though, it must be confessed, they were not usually so cautious to place their statements beyond contradiction. ¶ *Hast thou seen Abraham ?* This, like other questions of the Jews, was not proposed for information, but in mockery and derision. They desired to create an impression in the minds of the populace, that he uttered palpable untruths, and to put him to open shame. But, in so doing, they were often guilty of the most shameful perversion of his language. It was so in this case. He did not say he had seen Abraham ; but he said that Abraham saw his day, that is, that he beheld, by faith in the promise of God, or possibly in a prophetic vision or ecstasy, the advent of the Messiah for the salvation of the world.

58. *Verily, verily.* Or, amen, amen. A strong form of asseveration. ¶ *Before Abraham was.* “Before Abraham was born.”—Campbell. ¶ *I am.* That is, my existence has its origin from a period before Abraham was born. This testimony seems conclusive that our Lord existed, before he appeared in the flesh. See notes on John iii. 13 ; xvii. 5. He does not assert that he had existed from eternity ; nor does he here, or elsewhere, as some have wrongly understood, assert himself to be the supreme God of the universe. But I confess myself utterly unable to interpret this declaration in any fair manner, so that it shall be consistent with the fancy

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him : but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

## CHAPTER IX.

**A**ND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from

that he was a mere man, born as others, and that he had no conscious existence until nearly two thousand years after Abraham was born and gathered again to his fathers. Certainly, the most natural interpretation is, that he existed before Abraham. It is idle to give the word *before* the sense of *superior*, which it sometimes has ; for, in this sense, the reply of Jesus would have no perceivable relation to the question of the Jews, which related entirely to time, not to rank or dignity.

59. *Took they up stones, &c.* They made another attempt to kill him ; this time in a riotous and tumultuous manner. John v. 16. ¶ *He hid himself.* Probably, he mingled with the crowd, and thus escaped the rage of his adversaries. When he had finished his work, John xvii. 4, and xix. 30, he yielded himself to death, John x. 17, 18. But, until that time, he used the means for its preservation, which God had given him. Thus also may his followers have suitable regard for their lives, so long as they believe their continuance on the earth may be pleasing to God and profitable to mankind.

## CHAPTER IX.

1. *As Jesus passed by.* "That is, one day as he was going through the streets of Jerusalem. It seems not to have been on the day when he went out of the temple, as he is said to have done in ch. viii. 59."—*Pearce.*

2. *Who did sin, &c.* "It was a received doctrine in the Jewish schools, that children, according to some wickedness of their parents, were born lame, or crooked, or maimed, or defective in some of their parts, &c ; by which they kept their parents in awe, lest they should grow remiss and negligent in the performance of some rites, which had respect to their being clean, such as washings and purifyings, &c."—*Lightfoot.* The same author quotes from

his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Jewish writings proof that they also believed that infants might commit sin before they were born. It was, moreover, a common opinion that defects of body, and diseases generally, were occasioned by sin. So that the question of the disciples may be understood thus : Is this man's blindness the result of his parents' sin, or of his own before he was born ? Pearce interprets somewhat differently. On the presumption that the disciples did not *then* know that the man was born blind, he understands their question thus : Has this man brought blindness upon himself by his own sins, or was he born blind as the punishment of his parents' sins ?

3. *Neither hath this man sinned, &c.* Of course, our Lord's language is to be interpreted with reference to the subject to which it was applied. He did not intend to say the blind man and his parents were free from all sin ; for no man liveth and sinneth not. 1 Kings viii. 46 ; Rom. iii. 10—23 ; 1 John i. 8—10. His meaning evidently is, that the blindness was not occasioned by the sin of the individual who was thus afflicted, nor by the sin of his parents. It may be observed, that our Lord did not judge it necessary to combat the erroneous opinions entertained on this subject, in detail ; he left the reformation, in this case, as in many others, to be wrought by the gradual operation of the principles of truth which he firmly established. Hence he did not affirm that no man was born blind because his parents had sinned, nor even that no man committed sin before he was born ; but, confining his remark to this single case, he said this blindness was not the result of sin. It may also be observed, that, although diseases are frequently induced by the sinful indulgences and practices of men, and though blindness, or an affection of the other senses, may result from the same cause, yet such is *not always* the occasion of the malacia

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

and deprivations which affect the human race. So that it is by no means a safe rule, to estimate the purity of a man's heart by the soundness of his body or the perfection of his limbs. ¶ *That the works of God.* Probably special allusion is had to the miraculous power which was so soon to be displayed in opening the blind eyes. But, in a more general sense, it might be said that God permitted the blindness, that his power and grace might be manifested, in protecting and blessing one in such a helpless condition. For it is to be remembered, that, by what is sometimes called the law of compensation, what a man is deprived of on the one hand by the providence of God, is made good to him on the other; as, for example, when sight is destroyed, the hearing and feeling generally become more acute.

4. *I must work the works, &c.* I must perform the work which God hath given me to do. John xvii. 4. I must relieve the distressed, and manifest the gracious and benevolent character of him who sent me. ¶ *While it is day.* Literally, the day is the appropriate season for labor; and the night, for rest and refreshment. But the phrase is here used figuratively; and the meaning is, I must be diligent in my Father's service while I live on the earth. ¶ *For the night cometh, &c.* The time of my departure is at hand, after which I can no longer personally engage in such labor. It were well, if we were all alike conscious of our obligation to accomplish the greatest possible amount of good while we live. We must soon go hence, to be here no more; and though we may then enjoy God's mercies, we cannot be engaged in the service and for the benefit of men.

5. *I am the light of the world.* See notes on Matt. v. 14; John i. 9. The beams from this great moral luminary were more direct, while he remained on earth, than when reflected from his satellites or apostles. In a peculiar sense, therefore, he was the light of the world, while he remained on earth. Compare John xvii. 11—13.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is,

6. *Made clay, &c.* It must be remembered, that this was on the sabbath, ver. 14. The Jews fancied that spittle was a good medicine for the eyes; but, among other ridiculous trifles by which they encumbered the law, they held its application on the sabbath to be unlawful. Hence, it has been observed, that Jesus "does not heal this sick man with a word, as he did others; but chooseth to do a thing which was against their canonical observation of the sabbath. — While he mingles spittle with the dust, and of that makes a clay to anoint the eyes of the blind man, he thereby avoideth the suspicion of using any kind of charm; and gives rather a demonstration of his own divine power, when he heals by a method contrary to nature; for clay laid upon the eyes, we might believe, should rather put out the eyes of one that sees, than restore sight to one that had been blind. Yea, and further, he gave demonstration of the divine authority he himself had over the sabbath, when he heals upon that day, by the use of means which had been peculiarly prohibited to be used in it." — *Lightfoot.* The attentive reader of the scriptures cannot fail to have observed, that an unusually large proportion of our Lord's miracles were wrought on the sabbath-days; partly, perhaps, because on those days a larger concourse of people ordinarily assembled, and partly, I imagine, for the express purpose of convincing the punctilious Pharisees and scribes that no day was too sacred for works of benevolence and charity; that to relieve the distresses of men was more acceptable to God than the tithing of mint and anise, or the sacrifice of whole burnt-offerings. God desireth mercy rather than sacrifice, Matt. xii. 7.

7. *Pool of Siloam.* This pool was visited in 1832, by Messrs. Fisk and King, who thus describe it: "near the south-east corner of the city, [Jerusalem,] at the foot of Zion and Moriah, is the pool of Siloah, (see Neh. iii. 15,) whose waters flow with gentle murmur from under the holy mountain

by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 ¶ The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

of Zion, or rather from under Ophel, having Zion on the west, and Moriah on the north. The very fountain issues from a rock, twenty or thirty feet below the surface of the ground, to which we descended by two flights of steps. Here it flows out without a single murmur, and appears clear as crystal. From this place it winds its way several rods under the mountain, then makes its appearance with gentle gurgling, and, forming a beautiful rill, takes its way down into the valley, towards the southeast. We drank of the water, both at the fountain and from the stream, and found it soft, of a sweetish taste, and pleasant." ¶ *Sent.* Perhaps so called, as it was regarded as a blessing sent from God. It must not be forgotten that, in Palestine, fountains of living water, or natural springs, were very scarce. ¶ *Washed, and came seeing.* It cannot be supposed that sight was restored by any inherent virtue in the water, any more than by the clay made of dust and spittle. But trial was made of the man's faith, and it was manifested that the divine energy is not limited to any one manner of operation. It can heal by a touch, by a word, by the use of apparently ineffectual means, or otherwise, as God pleases. See 2 Kings v. 10-14; Luke xvii. 14.

8-12. *The neighbors, &c.* The number of blind persons in a community is comparatively so small, that their condition attracts the attention even of those who have no particular acquaintance with them. The neighbors, or those who frequently see them, recognize them as blind persons, though perhaps they have no further knowledge concerning them. ¶ *Some said, — others said, — &c.* So great was the change wrought in him, that his neighbors were doubtful as to his identity. They

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

13 ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day

had seen him as he *sat and begged*, and perhaps had given alms to him. When they saw him enjoying sight, some doubted whether he were the person whom they had before known. Such doubts were perfectly natural, and perfectly consistent with the slight acquaintance they had with the subject of this miraculous cure. ¶ *How were thine eyes opened?* Upon his declaration that he was the very person whom they had known as a blind beggar, they naturally inquired by what means his sight had been restored. In reply, he stated what Jesus had said and done to him. He did not attempt to describe the matter further than the facts were obvious. He knew he was healed, and rejoiced in the blessing, ver. 25; the process by which the means were rendered effectual, he did not profess to explain. ¶ *Where is he?* They desired to see the person who had wrought such a cure: as some think, for the purpose of retaking him or accusing him to the rulers for having violated the sabbath, ver. 14; but it may be doubted whether such intention is distinctly apparent in the narrative. For ought which appears to the contrary, they may have been inclined to believe that a person who could perform such a miracle, even though he had done it on the sabbath, must be a good man, ver. 16.

13. *Brought to the Pharisees, &c.* That is, to the Sanhedrim, which, being composed at that time almost exclusively of that sect, is frequently called simply Pharisees by this evangelist. Before that tribunal they carried him that had been blind, either to furnish proof that Jesus had violated the sabbath, or, perhaps more probably, to have the fact of the cure fully and publicly established, so that it might be known that a mighty prophet had appeared

When Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a

14. *It was the sabbath-day, &c.* On which day, the Pharisees held it unlawful to heal diseases, though they did not scruple to perform menial labor for the convenience of their beasts and the preservation of their property. Matt. xii. 10—12; Luke xiii. 15.

15. *Asked him how, &c.* At first, they did not deny the fact, as afterwards, ver. 18; but inquired by what means his sight had been restored.

16. *Is not of God.* He is not a true prophet, or friend of God. God would not send one, to violate his commandments. They took a one-sided view of the question altogether. Assuming that their own views concerning the sabbath were correct, they decided at once that any violation of its customary observance was sufficient evidence of sinfulness, without considering the purpose of the alleged violation. Had they reasoned otherwise, from the manifest fact that a blessing had been miraculously bestowed in relieving a fellow-mortal from a sore calamity, they might have concluded that Jesus was a lover of God and a friend of man. Thus widely do men often err from the truth, by regarding their own opinions as a sort of supreme tribunal, by which all other opinions and practices are to be pronounced right or wrong; they do not candidly and carefully examine questions in all their bearings; but upon this single point, of agreement or disagreement with their preconceived fancies, they approve or condemn without hesitation. ¶ *Others said, &c.* Either of the Sanhedrim or of the by-standers. Some were unwilling to adopt this summary process of deciding the matter. They suggested another and a very important consideration. ¶ *How can a man that is a sinner, &c.* Theirs was certainly the better argument; indeed, it was unanswerable; and the bigoted

man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that

Pharisees did not even attempt to answer it. And when it was enforced, more at large, by the man himself who had been blind, instead of any pretence even of answering, they gave vent to their chagrin and rage by casting him out of the synagogue, loaded with reproaches, ver. 30—34. ¶ *A division.* Neither party was ready to yield. Prejudice and pride of opinion rendered the Pharisees obstinate; and the others could not resist the impression made on their minds by such a manifest display of divine power.

17. *What sayest thou of him? &c.* Campbell translates, "What sayest thou of him for giving thee sight?" and adds, "The expression in the English translation does not convey the meaning so distinctly as could be wished. The sense is well expressed by Hammond, in his paraphrase: 'What opinion of him hath this work of power and mercy to thee, wrought in thee?' " ¶ *He is a prophet.* The plain common sense of this man enabled him to grasp the truth, which the more subtle Pharisees missed by their wire-drawn theories. Without troubling himself with their nice distinctions concerning works which might or might not be innocently performed on the sabbath, he concluded, and rightly too, that no one could perform such a miracle as had been wrought on himself, unless God were with him. John iii. 2. The process of thought, by which he arrived at this conclusion, is displayed in ver. 30—33.

13. *Did not believe, &c.* This, I think, should be understood to mean, that they would not acknowledge their belief; that is, they pretended not to believe. At the first, they did not deny the fact; and why should they? They had witnessed similar miracles of Jesus. Their pretence of unbelief was an afterthought. Finding that some of the people were

had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he

not satisfied with their decision that Jesus was a sinner, ver. 16, and that the man himself was deeply impressed by the miracle, ver. 17, they now attempted to discredit the whole matter, by causing the people to believe that the man had never been blind, but had fabricated this story for sinister purposes. ¶ *Called the parents.* Intending to entrap them in such manner as to fasten a falsehood on them or their son, if possible, and so persuade the people that the whole affair was a mere trick and imposition.

19. *Asked them, &c.* They first demanded to know if this were their son; then, if they would affirm that he was born blind; and finally, that they should describe the manner of his cure. On some of these points, the Pharisees hoped to extort contradictory testimony. If the parents would disown him as a son, or assert that he was not born blind, he would at once be proved an impostor; but their hope probably had its chief foundation upon the result of the last question,—how he obtained sight. Possibly, the parents might say he had been healed by medical treatment; or, if they supposed the cure was miraculous, they might describe it in a somewhat different manner, omitting or adding some circumstances, from which an appearance of contradiction might be skilfully drawn, and the people be persuaded to disbelieve the story altogether.

20, 21. *His parents answered, &c.* They answered wisely; stating what they knew to be facts, but forbearing to say anything of which they had not personal knowledge. They affirmed that this was actually their son, and that he was born blind. So much they knew; and thus far they fully confirmed his testimony. ¶ *But by what means, &c.* Very probably, the news of their

is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24 Then again called they the

son's restoration to sight had reached them, though it does not appear that he had yet seen them. But whether the marvellous story had been told to them by him or by others, they wisely and prudently, see ver. 22, declined to repeat it, as the events were not within their own knowledge. ¶ *He is of age.* That is, he is of sufficient age to give testimony. And he was the proper person to testify; for he alone, of those then present, had personal knowledge of the facts.

22. *Because they feared, &c.* They saw their danger, and therefore were more guarded in their testimony. The actual danger was twofold. If they had said anything which could be tortured into a contradiction of their son, his whole story would have been rejected as false, and additional prejudice excited against Jesus. But what they most feared was the danger of excommunication, or exclusion from the synagogue; for they knew the Pharisees had already determined thus to punish those who should confess that Jesus was the Christ. Unhappily, the example of the Pharisees has been much too closely imitated by many professed Christians, who, as the readiest and most effectual method of smothering the truth, have excommunicated them who openly avowed it.

24. *Then again called they, &c.* When their effort to impeach the testimony concerning the miracle was foiled by the cautious prudence of the witnesses, they resumed their former position, acknowledging the cure of the blindness, but denying that the miracle afforded any evidence that Jesus was sent of God. ¶ *Give God the praise.* The praise belongs to God for all which we enjoy; for every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from him. James i. 17. But this was not what the Pharisees in-

man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise : we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ?

27 He answered them, I have

tended. They were much less anxious to secure the praise to God, than to take it from Jesus. They had used their utmost efforts to withhold it from both, by denying the reality of the miracle. We cannot suppose them therefore to have felt really desirous that the man should praise God. Their sole object was to withdraw his confidence and gratitude from Jesus. Some interpret this as an adjuration that the man should confess the truth to God's glory, that the whole story of his miraculous cure was false. In such case, their object was the same as before stated, to destroy confidence in Jesus as a divine teacher. ¶ *We know that this man is a sinner.* They decided with the utmost confidence. Jesus had violated the sabbath, as they understood the rules for its observance ; and for this alone, without considering the merciful character of the act or the divine power manifested in it, they professed to *know* that he was a sinner, or a violator of God's law. The ground of their mistake, if it were not rather a wilfully false judgment, was, that they understood neither the spirit of the law nor the character of Jesus. Many have since erred, for similar reasons.

25. *I know not.* He had before given his opinion that Jesus was a prophet. The Pharisees had affirmed that he was a sinner, because, as they said, he had violated the law of the sabbath. The man who had been blind confessed his ignorance on this point, and would not attempt to affirm that he had or had not violated that law. Some understand the words as spoken ironically. ¶ *One thing I know*, &c. He knew this much more positively than the Pharisees knew that Jesus was a sinner ; with them, it was a matter of opinion, their judgment being blinded by prejudice ; with him, it was a matter of absolute knowledge. His eyes, which had been sealed from

told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ? will ye also be his disciples ?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses ! *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said

his birth, were now open to the light of day ; and there was no possibility that he could be deceived. He had a right to speak positively.

26. *What did he to thee ?* &c. Probably they repeated the question, hoping he would not answer it precisely as before, so that they might involve him in an apparent contradiction. Had they taken half as much pains to discover the truth as they did to suppress it, their own eyes might have been opened, and their hearts converted. But they were of a class not yet extinct, determined not to see.

27. *I have told*, &c. See ver. 15. ¶ *Ye did not hear.* This should be understood either interrogatively, as Campbell translates it, Did ye not hear ? or as meaning, ye did not believe my words. ¶ *Will ye also be his disciples ?* Do ye truly ask for information, willing to believe in him, upon satisfactory evidence ? Perhaps this question was designed to show them the absurdity of their conduct ; though, if such were the design, it was a hazardous experiment. He was in their power ; and he soon felt it.

23. *Reviled him.* Reproached him ; calling him a disciple of Jesus, which, in their opinion, was disgraceful and execrable. John vii. 47—49. ¶ *Moses' disciples.* We believe in Moses as a prophet, and in his law as divine. We revere his authority and obey his precepts.

29. *We know that God spake*, &c. They were right in acknowledging Moses as a messenger from God, upon the testimony of the miracles he wrought, and the law as communicated by God through him. Their mistake was, they were too positive they had rightly interpreted that law. The law was good ; but they had corrupted it by their foolish and false interpretations, and absolutely made it void in many

unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now, we know that God hear-

respects by their traditions. Matt. xv. 1—9. ¶ *As for this fellow.* There is nothing in the Greek answering to *fellow*; simply the pronoun is used. Some object to the manner in which our translators have rendered the phrase; but I think the sense is correctly expressed. The Pharisees had been striving, throughout the whole examination, to convict the witness of lying, or Jesus of imposture; and in the taunt which immediately follows, that Jesus was an obscure person, whose origin nobody knew, one might suppose there was something nearly akin to contempt. See note on Matt. xii. 24. ¶ *We know not from whence he is.* We know not his origin, nor character. We know not whether he is an impostor, or insane. By the contrast between this and what precedes, it would seem they intended to assert, chiefly, that Jesus did not, like Moses, speak the words of God or act by his authority; the conclusion would be, that he was a sinner. See Deut. xviii. 20.

30. *A marvellous thing.* A strange and unaccountable state of things. He expressed his amazement at their lack of understanding, or heedlessness. ¶ *That ye know not from whence he is, &c.* That is, that you should even doubt that he came from God, when he has performed such a miracle. In the succeeding verses, he states the reason of his surprise; and a striking instance is presented of the triumph of common sense over the skill of the professedly wise.

31. *God heareth not sinners.* This expression is not to be taken in its utmost latitude; for our Lord has commanded sinners to implore forgiveness from their heavenly Father, Luke xi. 4; and they may expect to be heard, if they pray in sincerity and truth. He that heareth the ravens when they cry will not refuse to hear his own children. Luke xii. 24. The phrase is here used with special reference to the subject of conversation between the speaker and his hearers, and is to be limited in its signification accordingly. The meaning evidently is, that God doth not hear

eth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the

sinners so as to aid them in the performance of miracles. It was customary with the ancient prophets, to appeal publicly to God for aid, when they wrought miracles. And he was said to *hear* them by granting their request. This was also sometimes done by our Lord. John xi. 41, 42. By saying, in reference to miracles, that God would not hear sinners, no more was intended than that he would not answer their appeal and grant the aid of his power. So much the Pharisees themselves would admit. Hence the man said, *we know* this; that is, it is a settled point, a truth beyond dispute. ¶ *Worshipper of God.* Wholly devoted to his will; ready to honor him at all times; rendering to him devout gratitude, and cherishing in him a humble but unwavering confidence. ¶ *Doeth his will.* Obeys his commandments; departs from evil and practises righteousness. ¶ *Him he heareth.* God will mercifully answer all the prayers of his sincere and obedient worshippers, granting those blessings which will be most beneficial to them, whether they be precisely such as are requested or not. But here the reference is specially to miraculous aid; and the meaning is, not that every sincere worshipper shall be able to perform miracles, as the phrase might seem in its largest sense to denote; but that such power was granted only to such persons. The argument is this: You pretend to believe that Jesus is a sinner notwithstanding he has opened my eyes by a miracle, and say you know not whence he is. Now it is confessedly true that God does not enable sinners to perform miracles in his name; he grants such power only to sincere worshippers and the obedient. As Jesus has manifested such power, he certainly cannot be a sinner.

32. *Since the world began, &c.* The argument is here further enforced. Not only was it admitted true, but an instance to the contrary could not be produced from the records of antiquity, that a sinner, a contemner and violator of the divine law, could not give sight to one who was born blind. Indeed it



eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

was not known that *any man* had done so, by any means whatever. The method of restoring sight to the blind by even a surgical operation was not known for centuries after the event here recorded; it is not much more than a hundred years, since the first operation of this kind, on record, was performed. But in this case, there was no surgery or medicine employed. If sight was given, it was given miraculously, as all were obliged to admit; and that it was given, both the man knew, and his parents and neighbors.

33. *Could do nothing.* That is, could perform no such miracle. God would not grant him power to open the eyes of the blind, if he were a sinner. The miracle plainly demonstrates that he is from God, notwithstanding you say you know not whence he is. This reasoning was conclusive. It was not refuted then; it has not been hitherto, nor can it be. This single instance of miraculous power was sufficient to prove the fact; yet it is only one of many. And we may safely rest in the conclusion, that no person could perform such miracles, unless God were with him. John iii. 2. The Jews and their imitators may use all the refinements of logic and metaphysics, to prove that it was unlawful to do good on the sabbath-day, and that any breach of their ceremonial observances was sinful, and that any one ought to be rejected as an impostor, who differed from them in his interpretation of the law and of the divine will;—it yet remains true, that God doth not impart miraculous power to sinners; that the exercise of such power is sufficient proof of a commission from God for the execution of his will; and that Jesus is to be received and believed as a teacher of truth *because* he had this seal of his mission from the Most High. Other proofs there are of his Messiahship; but if there were not, this one would be sufficient.

34. *Thou wast altogether born in sins, &c.* "That is, thou wast born in

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

a state of blindness, a state which proved that either thou or thy parents had sinned, and that this was the punishment for it. See ver. 2. Thou wast cursed by God with blindness for crime, and yet thou dost set up for a religious teacher! When men have no arguments, they attempt to supply their place by revilings. When they are *pressed* by arguments, they reproach their adversaries with crime, and especially with being *blind, perverse, heretical*, disposed to speculation, and regardless of the authority of God. And especially do they consider it great presumption that one of an inferior *age or rank* should presume to advance an argument in opposition to prevailing opinions." — *Barnes*. ¶ *They cast him out.* Expelled him from the synagogue; excommunicated him. The narrative in this verse is true to nature. Often has it occurred, that, for lack of argument, men have resorted to reproaches and abuse. When they have been utterly unable to answer the facts and arguments urged against them, instead of yielding to the power of truth, they have imitated the haughty Pharisees; and, scornfully demanding whether the alleged heretic pretends to know more than the church and to be their teacher, they have closed the argument by excommunication.

35, 36. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* That is, on the Messiah. ¶ *Who is he, &c.* The man had acknowledged his belief that the person who healed him was a prophet, and he seems ready to believe that he was the Messiah. But as yet he knew not Jesus personally; for, after anointing his eyes, Jesus departed, and he had not seen him when his sight was restored. ¶ *Lord.* Equivalent to Master, or Sir, according to the frequent use of the word. He did not then recognize Jesus as his benefactor. ¶ *That I might, &c.* He professed himself ready to acknowledge him who had opened his eyes to be the Messiah, if he might be

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 ¶ And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world ; that they which see not might see,

made acquainted with him. Show him to me, and I will confess him publicly and gratefully.

37, 38. *Thou hast both seen, &c.* That is, I am he. This may be understood, either, I am the Son of God, the Messiah, or, I am he that gave you sight. In either case, if taken in connexion with his question in ver. 35, this was a more distinct avowal of his Messiahship than he had made to any other, except the Samaritan woman, John iv. 26. ¶ *I believe.* He did not hesitate a moment ; but, grateful for the blessing he had received, and confident that no person could have bestowed it, except by divine aid, he at once professed faith in Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah. ¶ *And worshipped him.* He probably prostrated himself before him, in acknowledgment of his superior dignity, and on his knees poured forth the gratitude of his heart. See note on Matt. ii. 2 ; viii. 2. Although supreme homage and gratitude are due to God as the Ruler and Benefactor of men, yet should a degree of reverence and fervid gratitude be cherished and expressed towards them who are commissioned by him to communicate blessings ; and especially towards Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, whom he sent to bestow the unspeakable gifts of his grace. We need not fear that we shall dishonor the Father by honoring the Son. The real danger consists in too lightly esteeming him who was the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, his accredited representative among men. John v. 23 ; Heb. i. 3.

39. *For judgment I am come, &c.* The word *krima*, (ῥῆμα,) sometimes means condemnation ; but it cannot well have that signification here, as Jesus so frequently and explicitly stated that he came not to condemn, but to bless. John iii. 17 ; v. 45 ; vi. 38, 39 ; xii. 47. It seems rather to denote the manifestation of the true characters of

and that they which see, might be made blind.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also ?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin :

men, which would be one of the results of his ministry. I came into the world that the children of light and the children of darkness might be distinguished. ¶ *That they which see not, &c.* The immediate effect, rather than the main design, of our Lord's ministry, is here denoted. See note on Matt. x. 34. By *those which see not*, some understand the Gentiles, who had not the light of revelation, but sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Matt. iv. 16 ; others understand the literally blind, and suppose the phrase was suggested by the event which had so recently occurred. ¶ *Might see.* Either be restored to natural sight, or, more probably, be enabled to discern the truth and to perceive the way of life. ¶ *Which see.* The connexion requires us to understand, *those who suppose they see*, or those who are wise in their own conceit. Prov. xxvi. 12 ; Rom. xii. 16. The gospel was so inconsistent with the maxims of wisdom, as wisdom was then regarded, that the wise, those who were adepts in vain philosophy, rejected it as foolishness. But in so doing they really displayed folly rather than wisdom, and professing themselves to be wise, became fools. Rom. i. 22 ; 1 Cor. i. 17—21. ¶ *Might be made blind.* They were hardened in their unbelief. They professed to understand the scriptures. But they misinterpreted them, and rejected the Messiah when he appeared. Through pride of opinion and vanity of wisdom, they refused to listen to evidence, closed their eyes against the truth, and were shut up in darkness.

40. *Are we blind also?* The Pharisees were scandalized at the remark of Jesus, and demanded to know whether he doubted their clearness of mental perception, or considered them blind.

41. *If ye were blind, &c.* That is, if you had hitherto been in such darkness as has overshadowed the heathen world ; if you had never enjoyed the

but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth.

## CHAPTER X.

**V**ERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by

light of revelation. ¶ *Ye should have no sin.* You would be guiltless of the sin of unbelief. The phrase must be limited by the subject to which it is applied. Doubtless the heathen were guilty of sin, though blind to the truth ; but they were not criminal in this particular ; they had never seen and rejected the evidence of the truth. It is not the fault of a blind man, that he cannot see the sun ; nor is it the fault of one who has never heard of the Messiah, that he does not believe in him. ¶ *We see.* The Pharisees professed exact knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures ; they had not hesitated to condemn Jesus, because his practice differed from their opinions respecting the law. Yet these very scriptures announced the Messiah and described his character. John v. 39. It was owing to their pride and obstinacy that they did not recognize him when he appeared. ¶ *Your sin remaineth.* You are sinful. Your sin remains, and will remain so long as you reject me ; for your blindness is wilful and perverse. You have the means of knowledge, but will not use them. Whitby's paraphrase of this verse is judicious : " If ye were blind, that is, unable to discern who I am, if ye had neither the law and prophets to direct you, nor the light shining in your eyes, which is the case of the Gentiles, ye should have no sin of infidelity ; but now ye say we see, and arrogate to yourselves the knowledge of the law and prophets, and are confident you are guides to the blind, Rom. ii. 19, and yet will not receive the light which shineth in your eyes ; therefore your sin remaineth inexcusable." See also a similar remark, John xv. 22—24.

## CHAPTER X.

1. *I say unto you, &c.* This parable, as it is termed in ver. 6, is understood by some to have been delivered at the time and to the people mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter. But others assign a different date, and suppose an interval of about three months

the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth ;

elapsed between this and what is previously narrated ; because the preceding conversation appears to have occurred at the feast of tabernacles, John vii. 2, 10, in the month called by us October, while what follows is said to have been transacted at the feast of dedication, in the winter, ver. 22, or in December. ¶ *By the door.* Although Jesus calls himself the door, in ver. 7, he seems not to use the word here in the same sense, because he declares himself to be the true shepherd who entered by the door ; ver. 2, 11. We may understand him to mean by the door, in this place, the special appointment of God. All that pretended to be shepherds, who had no commission from God, those prophets who ran when they were not sent, were to be regarded as thieves and robbers, having a stronger regard for the fleece than for the flock. Commentators generally interpret ver. 1—18, with reference to true and false teachers in the Christian church, understanding our Lord to distinguish between those who enter the ministry through faith in him and an honest desire to promote the spiritual interests of mankind, and those who adopt that ministry for improper and sinister purposes. The discourse is doubtless applicable as an illustration of that subject ; but I apprehend our Lord had no direct reference to it. By the good shepherd he intended himself, not his worthy followers, as is manifest ; and by the thieves and robbers he intended the professed spiritual guides of that age, the Pharisees and scribes, and not the unworthy professors of his name in subsequent time. Briefly, his design was to portray the striking contrast between himself and his adversaries. We have no right to say he designed any other application ; though we may properly use his language in illustrating a less but similar contrast which has existed even to this day.

2. *He that entereth in by the door, &c.* Campbell translates, " The shepherd always entereth by the door ; " and adds, that the common translation " conveys

and the sheep hear his voice : and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him : for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers.

the notion, that the shepherd is the only person who enters by the door, yet the owner, the door-keeper, and the sheep themselves, also enter the same way. The original expression is manifestly intended to denote the constant, not the peculiar, use which the shepherd makes of the door, as opposed to the constant use of thieves and robbers to force their entrance, by breaking or climbing over the fence. The comparison is made, not to the folds used by the common people in remote parts of the country, but to those belonging to the rich in the neighborhood of a populous city, where the walls and other fences need to be stronger, and the entrance more carefully kept, on account of the greater danger from thieves." As the true shepherd of the flock enters his fold by the door, so Jesus, who is the true shepherd, the good shepherd, who was sent to seek and to save that which was lost, came by divine appointment, with a special commission for this purpose, verified and confirmed by the divine energy with which he was so abundantly endowed. Such I understand to be the general idea in this parable.

3—5. The imagery here employed, which is all drawn from facts and customs well known in the East, seems designed to show, that as it is a distinguishing characteristic of the good shepherd that he should provide for the security and comfort of his flock, so the kindness of Jesus towards men, and his labors and sacrifices for their benefit, gave sufficient evidence that he was the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. 1 Pet. ii. 25. ¶ *Porter*. An under-shepherd or door-keeper. ¶ *Hear his voice*. Or, recognize his voice. Sheep soon become accustomed to the voice of their keeper, and will flock around him, while they would fly in terror from a stranger. ¶ *By name*. It is said that eastern shepherds distin-

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them : but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers : but the sheep did not hear them.

guish the individual sheep in their flocks by name, and that the sheep soon appear to recognize their several names. ¶ *Leadeth them out*. That is, to the pasture, where they feed, or to the water. ¶ *Putteth forth*. Or, leadeth out. ¶ *He goeth before them*. The eastern shepherds do not drive their sheep; but, going before, call them, and they follow, whithersoever they are led. ¶ *A stranger*. One to whose appearance and voice they are not accustomed. ¶ *Will they not follow, &c.* Sheep are proverbially fearful of strangers; they will not follow such, but flee from them.

6. *This parable*. See note on Matt. xiii. 3. ¶ *They understood not, &c.* They understood the facts, for they were perfectly familiar; but they did not comprehend the design of Jesus, or the manner in which he designed to apply what he had said.

7. *I am the door*. There is in this discourse what is called a mixed metaphor. Jesus first describes himself as a *shepherd* entering the fold through the door, ver. 2; then, here, as the door itself; and again as the shepherd, ver. 11. But, though the figure be thus changed, the idea is obvious. Jesus distinctly explains in what sense he is the door of the sheep, in ver. 9.

8. *All that ever came before me, &c.* Jesus surely did not refer to Moses and the prophets; for he always recognized them as true servants of God. Some have supposed he referred to persons who had previously pretended to be the Messiah; but there is no evidence that any false Messiah appeared before the true one, though such pretenders afterwards deceived the people. It is altogether probable, that he referred to the scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to be religious and spiritual guides; the same whom he elsewhere styles "blind leaders of the blind," and whose evil

9 I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy : I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

and corrupt dispositions, even when professedly engaged in their calling as spiritual teachers, he portrays in vivid colors. See Matt. vii. 15; xv. 14; xxiii. 4, 14, 15, 23. ¶ *The sheep*, &c. The pious and well-disposed portion of the Jews were not utterly corrupted by their iniquitous leaders. The number was comparatively small; yet there were some sincere worshippers of God, who held fast their integrity, were faithful to the light they enjoyed, and waited for the consolation of Israel.

9. *I am the door*. See note on ver.

¶ *By me if any man enter in*, &c. This is equivalent to believing in Christ and in Him by whom he was sent. And being *saved* answers to the obtaining of everlasting life. See John iii. 15; v. 24; vi. 47. ¶ *Go in and out, and find pasture*. By the figure of flocks' obtaining food, when following their shepherd, Jesus declares that his disciples shall receive an abundant supply for all their spiritual wants. The idea is identical with that expressed in John vi. 35, 51.

10. *The thief cometh not*, &c. It is characteristic of false teachers, that they consult their own good, rather than that of the people. They desire aggrandizement, rather than the spiritual culture of the flock. They seek *theirs*, rather than *them*. Such was the character of the scribes and Pharisees, to whom the description was undoubtedly intended to apply. ¶ *I am come*, &c. Jesus came for a far different purpose; not to grind and oppress the poor; not to devour widows' houses and wring from the fatherless and powerless their scanty pittance; not to bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, refusing to assist in bearing them; not to add a single pang to the

12 But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

affliction of the miserable; but that they might have life, and joy, and peace. John iii. 16, 17; v. 24; xii. 32. ¶ *More abundantly*. This denotes the expansive nature of the spiritual life, which gradually unfolds itself to meet every exigency of the believer; to cheer him when despondent, to console him when afflicted, to guard and preserve him when tempted, to fill his heart with gratitude while living, and with confidence and hope when dying. It adapts itself to all his wants, and is a never-failing source of the purest enjoyment. See John vi. 35; vii. 33.

11. *I am the good shepherd*. See Ps. xxiii.; Isa. xl. 11; Luke xv. 4—7; John xxi. 15—17; Heb. xiii. 20. ¶ *Giveth his life*, &c. The faithful shepherd often exposes his life, in the East, in protecting his flock against wolves and other ravenous beasts. See the application of this figure, in ver. 15.

12. *He that is a hireling*. One who is hired; one who has no personal interest in the flock, but renders certain services for stipulated wages. In the East, the owner of a flock usually performed the duty of shepherd personally. The contrast here is between the owner and a hired servant. ¶ *Seeth the wolf*, &c. The idea is, he will not hazard his own life to protect the flock; but when danger approaches, he will secure himself and abandon his charge to destruction.

13. *Because he is a hireling*, &c. As he has no individual interest in the flock, and regards only his wages, a hired servant could not be expected to hazard his life in their defence.

14. *Know my sheep*. Jesus was able to distinguish between the true and hypocritical worshippers of God; and while he rebuked the proud and formal Pharisees, he accepted and approved

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

the penitent publicans and sinners. Luke xviii. 9—14; John ii. 25. ¶ *I Am known of mine.* Those who were prepared for the kingdom of heaven, recognized Jesus by his words and his works, and embraced him as the Messiah.

15. *As the Father knoweth, &c.* See notes on Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22; John i. 18; vi. 46. ¶ *I Lay down my life, &c.* To die on their behalf. See Rom. v. 8; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. ii. 14; Heb. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 2.

16. *Other sheep I have.* There is an allusion here to the all-embracing plan of the gospel, which was designed both for Jews and Gentiles,—all the nations, families, and kindreds, of the earth. A very small flock, a “little flock,” had then been gathered; but Jesus claimed others as *his own*, and declared that they also should be brought into the fold. “This does not imply that they were *then* his friends, but that they would be. There were others whom it was his purpose and intention to call to the blessings of the gospel and salvation. The purpose was so sure, and the fact that they would believe on him so certain, that he could use the present tense as if they were already his own. He called things that be not, as though they were. Rom. iv. 17. This purpose was in accordance with the promise, ‘He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.’ Isa. liii. 11.”—*Barnes.* It may be added, that although the *sheep* here mentioned had not yet entered the fold or become disciples, still they actually belonged to Christ, according to the promise, and his own declaration. See Ps. ii. 8; John xvii. 2, 9, 10, 20, 21. ¶ *Not of this fold.* Meaning, probably, not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles. ¶ *Them also, &c.* These were to be converted and saved, as well as the Jews. ¶ *One fold, and one shepherd.* All are to become united in one glorious church, of which Jesus Christ is the shepherd and

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my

head. 1 Cor. xi. 3; Eph. v. 23. All shall acknowledge him as their guide and ruler, even as the shepherd is the guide of his flock. Phil. ii. 10, 11. Such was the purpose for which Jesus came into the world; to save all men, even sinners, and convert them to God, to put away all enmity from their hearts, and to make them willing subjects to God and to righteousness. He has sufficient power to perform the work assigned him, and he will prosecute it to its final completion. Then, and not before, will he resign his kingdom and his power, and, with the children whom God has given him, will become subject to the Father and God of all. 1 John iv. 14; 1 Tim. i. 15; Heb. ii. 7—9; 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

17. *Therefore, &c.* The obedience of Jesus to the Father, in all things, and especially in submitting to death for the benefit of men, entitled him to the love of the Father; and the apostle declares, that, for this obedience, God not only loved his Son, but exalted him to be Lord of all. Phil. ii. 8—11. ¶ *I lay down, &c.* Although the nervous sensibility of Jesus was excited even to agony by the contemplation of his approaching death, yet, when the hour came, the victim was ready; he submitted himself freely and cheerfully to the disposal of his Father, and into his hands he committed his spirit. John xviii. 11; Luke xxiii. 46. ¶ *Might take it again.* Might receive it again; that is, be raised from the dead, and be glorified with the glory he enjoyed before his incarnation. John xvii. 5. It is not intimated that he would raise himself from the dead; but that he would receive life again from the Father.

18. *No man taketh, &c.* It was not in the power of men to destroy his life, except by divine permission. He escaped their fury, frequently, when they were resolved to slay him. And he distinctly declared, when about to die.

**Father.**

19 ¶ There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

that he could then, so far as power was concerned, avoid the catastrophe; to which, nevertheless, he voluntarily submitted, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, the will of God accomplished, and the great purpose of his ministry consummated. Matt. xxvi. 53, 54; Luke xxiv. 25—27; John xix. 11. ¶ *I have power, &c.* I am authorized to lay down my life, and to receive it again. None could take it away, otherwise; and none can prevent me from receiving it again. ¶ *This commandment, &c.* It is by the appointment of God that I shall die for mankind, and be raised from the dead.

19. *There was a division, &c.* A schism. Some believed, and some mocked. See ver. 20, 21.

20. *Hath a devil.* See note on John vii. 20. ¶ *Is mad.* Deranged, insane. They alleged that his language was such as no person of sound mind would utter.

21. *Others said, &c.* They discovered more of wisdom than insanity in his words. They were inclined to believe him a true prophet, or the Messiah. ¶ *Can a devil open, &c.* See John ix. 1—7. The event was recent, and fresh in their recollection, having occurred on the same day, as some think, or, according to others, about three months previously. See note on ver. 1.

22. *Feast of the dedication.* Feast of renewal or renovation. "The temple was profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes in the year 167, and was purified in the year 164, before Christ. Its dedication at the time of its being purified, was celebrated eight days with many sacrifices, beginning at the twenty-fifth of the month *Kisleu* or December. [That is, about the tenth of De-

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

cember, according to the present reckoning.] This dedication was converted into an anniversary, which was called by various names, namely, *Encaenia*, [feast of renewal;] the days of the dedication of the altar; and likewise, the purification of the temple. 1 Macc. iv. 52—59; 2 Macc. x. 1—8; John x. 22." —*Jahn*.

23. *Solomon's porch.* "The porch called Solomon's, (John x. 23; Acts iii. 11,) was on the east side or front of the temple, and was so called because it was built by this prince, upon a high wall of four hundred cubits from the valley of Kedron." —*Calmet*.

24. *Tell us plainly.* They evidently understood, from his application to himself of the character of a true shepherd of the flock, and from the miracles which he wrought, or, as his enemies insinuated, pretended to perform, that he designed to be regarded by the people as the Messiah. Some suppose the question here was proposed in good faith; but the contrary is more probable; because, as soon as Jesus spake more plainly, even though he did not in terms absolutely assert that he was the Messiah, they were filled with rage, and were disposed to kill him, ver. 31. This looks not much like a teachable disposition on their part.

25. *I told you, &c.* It does not appear that he had distinctly and in so many words declared himself to be the Messiah; yet he had exhibited sufficient evidence of the fact by his miracles, and had used language which was understood to convey that idea. John v. 19, 36; vi. 33—40; viii. 51, 56, 58. ¶ *The works, &c.* See ver. 37, 38; John iii. 2; xv. 24.

26. *Are not of my sheep, &c.* Ye are

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me :

28 And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

not fitly disposed for the kingdom of God ; ye are not sincere worshippers of God ; ye are not sufficiently meek and humble to become disciples. See John viii. 47.

27. *My sheep.* My disciples. The figure of speech, by which he had described himself as the shepherd of the flock, is still preserved. Perhaps with his disciples are here included those whose minds were in a suitable state to become such. ¶ *Hear my voice.* Attend to my instructions, and believe my testimony, ver. 3, 4. ¶ *I know them.* See ver. 14. ¶ *They follow me.* They walk in my footsteps, or imitate me. Such seems the most obvious import of the figure. Sheep follow a shepherd wherever he leads. Jesus not only pointed out the way of righteousness, and commanded his disciples to walk in it, but he trod it himself, and embodied the principles of his doctrine in his own life. Our attainments in righteousness may be correctly estimated by the nearness of our conformity to the example of our Master.

23. *Eternal life.* See notes on John iii. 15 ; v. 24 ; vi. 40. ¶ *Never perish.* See note on John iii. 16. ¶ *Neither shall any man, &c.* No power shall prevail against me, to prevent me from bestowing on my followers the blessings which I came to communicate. See Rom. viii. 33, 39.

29. *Which gave them me.* See Ps. ii. 8 ; John iii. 35 ; vi. 39 ; xvii. 2, 6, 10. ¶ *Greater than all.* His power is supreme and infinite. None can prevent him from accomplishing his purposes. He sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and committed to him power to bestow eternal life on all his children. The certainty of the result is secured by the fact, that God is greater than all, and able to do his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. The most violent efforts of men avail nought against his power, and cannot frustrate his designs. He maketh even the wrath of men to praise him, and restraineth the remainder of wrath. Ps. lxxvi. 10 ; Dan. iv. 35. ¶ *No man is*

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

30 I and *my* Father are one.

31 Then the Jews took up stones

*able, &c.* None has power to rob God of one of his children. Jesus here, as elsewhere, recognized God as the fountain of power. Having said that none could pluck his followers out of his hand, he gives, as the reason, the assurance that God had committed them to his charge, and would not suffer them to be wrested from him. There is no reason, therefore, to apprehend any failure of the design for which God sent his Son into the world. It will surely be accomplished. The God who cannot lie has promised ; and the God who is omnipotent will perform.

30. *I and my Father are one.* This is understood by many commentators as an assertion of absolute oneness with God ; in other words, that Jesus Christ was the supreme God. This interpretation is inadmissible, because, throughout his whole ministry, Jesus distinguished himself from the Father, as expressly as language enabled him to do ; he professed that he was sent by the Father, not to perform his own will, but the Father's, and that the words he uttered and the miracles he performed were by commandment and by the power of the Father ; he prayed to the Father, professed his dependence on him, and, in the hour of expiring agony, committed his spirit into his hands. And, if this were not enough, in the verse immediately preceding, he declared that the Father was greater than all, of course acknowledging his own inferiority in this respect ; and the same fact is more absolutely asserted John xiv. 28. The evident meaning of the phrase is, that the Father and Son were united in desire and purpose in regard to the great work in which Jesus was engaged. And the power by which he was able to protect his followers, ver. 23, was in fact the power of the Father, ver. 29, communicated to him for that special purpose, John xvii. 2. Hence it was, that the result was secure, beyond the possibility of failure. In John xvii. 11, 21, precisely the same word is used, both in the original and in the translation ; but nobody believes that Jesus prayed



again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

that all his disciples might become identical with himself and his Father, or that they might become the supreme God. But he did pray, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." This use of the phrase may sufficiently illustrate its meaning in the text.

31. *The Jews took up stones, &c.* They alleged that he blasphemed, ver. 33; and death by stoning was the penalty denounced by the law against blasphemers. *Lev. xxiv. 14—16.* ¶ *Again.* See a previous instance of the kind, John viii. 59.

32. *Many good works.* Many benevolent miracles. All the actions of Jesus, whether ordinary or miraculous, were marked by a spirit of kindness and love. He returned not evil for evil. But while his enemies gnashed their teeth in rage, and endeavored even to destroy his life, he patiently endured the abuse, and continued to labor for their good. What a blessed example for imitation! ¶ *Showed you from my Father.* I have wrought them by the divine energy bestowed on me by the Father. While defending himself against a charge of blasphemy in assuming too high a character, he again called their attention to those works which demonstrated his Messiahship, that they might even then believe and be saved. A scene of moral grandeur, superior to this, can scarcely be conceived; the Son of God laboring to convert men, with deadly malice in their hearts and stones in their hands, scarcely restrained from inflicting summary vengeance on him. ¶ *For which, &c.* This was an appeal to what might be left of reason and virtue in them. He demanded what act of his life could be selected, in justification of their savage violence; or what he had done, worthy of an ignominious death.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

33. *For a good work, &c.* They disclaimed the intention of returning evil for good; but little dependence can be placed on their assertion. They had long sought an occasion to destroy him. And there can be little doubt, that the language of an apostle concerning another sinner was equally applicable to them: they hated him because their own works were evil and his were good. 1 John iii. 12. ¶ *Blasphemy.* See note on Matt. ix. 3. ¶ *Makest thyself God.* Possibly, they so understood him. But he immediately pointed out the impropriety of such an interpretation of the language he used, inasmuch as they themselves were accustomed to even stronger expressions of a similar kind, which they did not account blasphemous, or indicative of equality with God. It might well be doubted whether they could have thus misapprehended his meaning, were it not that many honest and sincere Christians, since, have fallen into a similar mistake.

34—36. *Jesus answered them, &c.* In this answer, he called their attention to their own scriptures, in which they professed confidence, and showed them that he had by no means transgressed or gone beyond the authorized forms of speech. ¶ *Ye are gods.* See Exo. iv. 16; vii. 1; xxii. 28; Ps. lxxxiii. 1, 6; cxxxviii. 1. The magistrates or judges, as was Moses, were called gods, on account of their dignity and authority. ¶ *Unto whom the word of God came.* Who were commissioned to speak in God's name. There is a contrast here made by Jesus, which deserves notice. These prophets were mere men, and the word of God came to them, or was impressed on their minds by revelation or otherwise: on the contrary, *he himself* came from the Father, from his home with God, John i. 18; iii. 13; and he brought the word of God with him. In short, he had a more accurate knowl-

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

edge than they of the divine will. ¶ *Scripture cannot be broken.* That is, its authority cannot be disputed or disregarded. Any form of speech there used is lawful. ¶ *Say ye of him, &c.* The argument is, If the scripture applies the title *gods* to magistrates and rulers, who speak or act under the authority of God's law, it is right, and therefore not blasphemous, thus to apply it. If it were right to apply it to them, it cannot be wrong to apply it to others like them. If you consider it right that they should be called gods, with what propriety can you accuse me of blasphemy, for calling myself the Son of God, when I actually am superior to them in authority and dignity, inasmuch as they were men to whom the word of God *came*, while I was set apart to this very work and sent from heaven to earth by God himself? ¶ *Sanctified.* To sanctify is to make holy. But, figuratively, it denotes to set apart to a holy purpose or use. This is its meaning here. Jesus was never unholy, and therefore needed not to be literally sanctified. But he was set apart or consecrated to the office of Messiah or Christ; both which terms signify *anointed*, and naturally imply the idea of consecration. ¶ *Son of God.* He had spoken of God as his Father in a peculiar sense, which was equivalent to styling himself the Son of God. And this phrase was considered equivalent to the Messiah. It is to be observed, that there is a vast difference between the terms *Son of God*, and *God the Son*; and that our Lord appropriated the former title to himself, but not the latter. In this argument, he showed the Jews, (1.) that, even though he were but a man, he might have called himself *god* without blasphemy; for thus their own scriptures termed other men: and, (2.) that he had not used this title in regard to himself, but had only called himself the Son of God, necessarily acknowledging God as his superior, and of course not blasphemously pretending to be the supreme God himself.

37. *If I do not the works, &c.* Hav-

39 Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand,

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

ing refuted their charge of blasphemy, by showing that he had not *made* or pretended *himself* God, he proceeded to enforce the evidence that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, "whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world." And here, as was his usual custom, he appealed to his works as evidence of his mission. However lightly certain philosophers, as they are reputed, may esteem the evidence of miracles, Jesus always appealed to it as authentic and conclusive, and pronounced those who rejected it to be inexcusable. John xv. 24. ¶ *Believe me not.* If there be any trick or deception in the works I perform, if they do not actually exhibit a divine energy, you are at liberty to regard me as an impostor.

38. *But if I do, &c.* The meaning is, Even though you should not be convinced that God has sent me, by my own declarations, nor by the disposition which I manifest towards men, or the purifying, sanctifying nature of the gospel preached by me, yet if I actually perform miracles which no person could perform unless God were with him, John iii. 2, then believe the works; be convinced by them that God aids me, and remember that he does not thus aid sinners or them who disobey his commandments. ¶ *That the Father, &c.* The idea embraced in ver. 30, is here repeated in a different form. The union thus indicated is one of feeling and purpose, not of person, as may be seen by comparing John xiv. 20; xvii. 21.

39. *Sought again to take him.* They seem to have been conscious that he had fully exculpated himself from the charge of blasphemy, for they abandoned their intention of stoning him. But they sought to apprehend him, as in John vii. 30, 44, that he might be examined before the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Escaped.* See note on John viii. 59.

40. *Where John at first baptized.* That is, at Bethabara, John i. 28, which place, as some say, was also called Bethany.

41, 42 *John did no miracle. The*

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 And many believed on him there.

## CHAPTER XI.

**N**OW a certain *man* was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany,

people were satisfied, from other evidence, that John was a prophet. It is implied, that, as Jesus did work miracles, they considered him superior to John. ¶ *All things which John spake — were true.* Perhaps referring to John's declaration that Jesus was vastly superior to him and should perform mightier works. From its connexion with the preceding remark, this would seem to be the allusion. The miracles they witnessed verified the prediction of John. ¶ *Many believed.* The testimony of John, and its fulfilment in the character and works of Jesus, convinced them that he was the Messiah.

## CHAPTER XI.

1. *A certain man was sick.* The interval which elapsed after Jesus left Judea, John x. 40, and before the events here recorded, is not expressly defined. But while he was dwelling at Bethabara, "where John at first baptized," a man near Jerusalem became sick. His sisters, having previous acquaintance with Jesus, sent for him, in this emergency. The subsequent events are minutely detailed in this chapter. It is observable, that neither of the other evangelists mention the stupendous miracle by which Lazarus was raised from the dead,—one of the most striking, and at the same time one of the most fully described miracles recorded in the scriptures. Various reasons have been suggested for this omission. The following appears as natural and reasonable as any: The Jews were enraged at the impression produced on the people by the resurrection of Lazarus, and sought to destroy his life. John xii. 9—11. It is supposed that he might have been living, when the three former gospels were written, and that a reference to his case was omitted, lest the rage of the Jews should have been excited anew, and he subjected to persecution and

the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he

perhaps a violent death. Tradition says he died about thirty years after his miraculous restoration to life. But the earliest date assigned to John's gospel is A. D. 68; and some place it as late as A. D. 93. In either case, Lazarus had previously died, and there was no longer a reason to suppress a public proclamation of the miracle. So Grotius, Whitby, and others. ¶ *Bethany.* A village, on the declivity of the mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, and a favorite resort of our Lord. See note on Matt. xxi. 1. ¶ *The town of, &c.* The residence. So John i. 44.

2. *It was that Mary which anointed &c.* See John xii. 1—3. The anointing is here mentioned by anticipation to identify the individual. Although the anointing was subsequent to the resurrection of Lazarus, yet the event occurred so long before the evangelist wrote, that he properly refers to it in the past tense. *That Mary who anointed Jesus* must have been a phrase familiar to the early Christians; for as there were several Marys worthy of remembrance, it was natural to distinguish them by something peculiar in their history; and we may well suppose *this* Mary would be commemorated by this special token, from the declaration of Jesus, in Mark xiv. 9.

3. *His sisters sent, &c.* From their previous acquaintance with him, they had no doubt of his willingness to aid them in their extremity; and they appealed to him with perfect confidence. ¶ *He whom thou lovest.* See ver. 5. Jesus had evidently been previously acquainted in this family, and observed in its members something deserving his special regard. "This shows that peculiar attachments are lawful for Christians, and that those friendships are peculiarly lovely which are tempered and sweetened with the spirit of Christ."

said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore

—*Barnes*. It is our duty to cherish a spirit of kindness and love towards all; yet we may lawfully and must necessarily exercise it in a peculiar degree towards those with whom we are most intimately associated, provided their spirits and ours be of congenial character.

4. *Not unto death*. The usual idea conveyed by this phrase is, *not fatal*, or not resulting in death. The meaning here is different; for Lazarus did die, ver. 14, and doubtless of that very sickness. A similar form of expression occurs Rom. xi. 11: "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles," &c. They stumbled, and they fell; yet, because their fall was not the final or principal result of their stumbling, Paul asserts most solemnly that they did not stumble that they should fall. So here; Lazarus was sick, and he died of that sickness; yet Jesus asserts that his sickness was not unto death, or designed to result in death, because another and more glorious consequence was contemplated, even his resurrection by the power of God. The phrase is a common Hebraism, and its meaning is, this sickness is not so much designed to result in death, as for the display of God's glory. ¶ *For the glory of God*. That is, that God may be honored by the open manifestation of his power. ¶ *That the Son of God*, &c. The exalted nature and character of Jesus was displayed in the stupendous miracles here referred to; exhibiting the power, not only of restoring suspended animation, but of arresting the progress of decomposition when commenced, and reanimating a body which had already begun to be resolved into its original elements. Such a miracle could no man perform except by divine power. The exhibition of such power would cause its possessor to be honored or glorified by all good men.

5. *Jesus loved*, &c. He loved all mankind, and gave the surest evidence that his love was sincere. John xv. 13. But,

that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 His disciples say unto him,

in this family, he had perceived such an unusual degree of true piety and devotion, of love towards God and kindness towards mankind, of faith in God's promises and confidence in his goodness of regard to his chosen messenger and attention and obedience to his instructions, that he cherished for them a peculiar affection. We may and should love all; but it is impossible to regard the sinful and the devout, those who injure us and those who rejoice in our prosperity and weep for our afflictions, with precisely the same emotions. We must esteem some more highly than others. We must feel a stronger sympathy with some than with others. And it is not sinful to do so, provided we cultivate kindness towards all, even our enemies, and strive to do them good, according to their need and our ability. So did the Master; and his disciples may safely imitate him.

6. *Abode two days*. He delayed his journey to Judea, partly that the faith both of Lazarus and of his sisters might have full trial, but chiefly that there might not appear the slightest cause of suspicion in regard to the miracle he had resolved to perform. He would have the Jewish neighbors fully satisfied that Lazarus was dead. They should not even suspect any trick or deception. They should not suspect any collusion between the parties. Had he so chosen, he might have healed Lazarus at the moment when his sickness was announced; or he might have gone immediately to Bethany and prevented his death, ver. 21. But the miracle would have been less striking and impressive. Such was the probable cause of his delay. It surely was not occasioned by any lack of sympathy for distress, or unwillingness to relieve it. See ver. 35.

7. *After that*. Namely, after the expiration of two days, ver. 6.

8. *Of late*, &c. See John x. 31. The disciples were astonished that he would voluntarily again place his life in peril. They knew not his unwavering confidence in divine protection until he

Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, should finish his work, nor his resolve to drink the cup prepared, whenever the Father should present it. After they received the Holy Ghost, they could realize something of this firmness of principle and the sustaining power of faith. But now they were astonished at what they regarded as the presumption of their Master.

9, 10. *Twelve hours, &c.* The Jews divided the day, from sunrise until sunset, into twelve equal parts. The idea embraced in these two verses is almost precisely the same as in John ix. 4, 5. Here, the figure is taken, as usual, from the subject of conversation, namely, a journey into Judea. A traveller "can journey with safety by day, under the light of the sun, but not in the darkness of the night. The ministry and death of Christ are represented by the imagery of day and night. While the period of his ministry lasted, he was free from peril, and could therefore go to Bethany without apprehension; but when that period was past, when the night came on, then, and not till then, there would be peril. His language, therefore, was an encouragement for them to go."—*Livemore.*

11. *Lazarus sleepeth.* He is dead. The term *sleep* is frequently used in the scriptures to denote *death*. It is said the Jews adopted the word *sleep*, from their unwillingness to mention death directly. Other phrases, also, were used by them for the same purpose, such as being gathered to one's fathers, &c. *Sleep* is well adapted to express the idea of death, partly from a resemblance between a dead and a sleeping person,

if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jesus came, he

and partly because it seems to imply that existence is not utterly extinguished, but that it shall be renewed. See note on Mark v. 39. See also 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 13—15. ¶ *Awake him, &c.* Raise him to life.

12. *If he sleep, &c.* The disciples understood Jesus to speak of literal sleep. And as sleep was considered a favorable indication, in some diseases, they supposed the danger was passed, and suggested that he need not undertake such a hazardous journey. They were fearful to enter Judea, lest they should again encounter violence.

13—15. Perceiving that his disciples misunderstood him, Jesus explained his meaning, and informed them that Lazarus was dead. ¶ *I am glad, &c.* See note on ver. 4. The Lord was not glad that he was absent, and that Lazarus died, and that his sisters were thus afflicted, because he delighted in misery. But he rejoiced that an opportunity was afforded for a more convincing proof of his mission from God. See note on ver. 4. He was glad, not for the grief that had been endured, but for the blessed consequences which would result from the act which he was thus enabled to perform. ¶ *To the intent, &c.* For the purpose of affording such evidence as shall confirm your faith.

16. *Thomas, which is called Didymus.* As is customary with this evangelist, he interprets the Hebrew Thomas by the corresponding Greek name Didymus; the name, in either language, signifies a *twin*. ¶ *That we may die with him.* The apostles believed the journey would be hazardous, ver. 8;

found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:)

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she

and although Jesus intimated that something should occur to confirm their faith in him, Thomas, with his characteristic slowness to believe, (see John xx. 24—29,) plainly intimated that he would lose his own life instead of convincing them; and, with a sort of desperation, suggested that they might as well all go and die together.

17. *In the grave four days.* It would seem that he was buried on the day of his death. See ver. 39. It was customary to bury the dead soon after life had departed, except when the body was embalmed, on account of the rapid decomposition which took place in that climate. Moreover, Lazarus might have died of some putrid or infectious disease, which rendered even an unusually speedy burial necessary.

18. *Was nigh.* The nearness of Bethany to Jerusalem was mentioned as explanatory of the fact that many Jews visited Martha and Mary to console them. The family appears to have been well known in Jerusalem. ¶ *Fifteen furlongs.* About two miles.

19. *To comfort.* The Jews "were wont to comfort the mourners in the way, as they were returning from the grave, and they would bring them back to their own house the day that the party deceased was interred. They comforted them also all the remaining days of mourning, which we find done in this place. Thirty days were allotted for the time of mourning; but, 'we must not weep for the dead beyond the measure. The three first days are for weeping; seven days for lamentation; thirty days for the intermission from washing their clothes, or shaving themselves.'"—*Lightfoot*. The gathering at the house of Martha may have been one of mere ceremony, like that which was so customary; or true and sincere friends may have assembled, to sympathize with the afflicted and console them.

heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

20. *Then Martha, &c.* She had the charge of the household, Luke x. 40. She seems first to have learned the approach of Jesus, and, without informing her sister, rushed out to meet him. Or, if his approach was known to both, yet, as commentators have not failed to notice, the conduct of the two sisters was characteristic. Martha had more active energy, and was better prepared to meet Jesus and converse with him. Mary was of a more gentle, delicate cast, energetic rather in enduring than in action, more deeply afflicted by this bereavement, and not so ready to rouse herself from the almost stupefying grief which crushed her spirit. ¶ *Mary sat, &c.* She preserved the ordinary posture of a mourner. Perhaps she thought Jesus had come too late; and the idea that more seasonable aid might have preserved her brother's life would not unnaturally increase rather than diminish her grief, and add a pang to the bitterness of her woe.

21. *My brother had not died.* She knew he had power to heal the sick, for he had previously displayed it; and she doubted not he would readily have preserved the life of her brother, if he had been present. For this purpose, she had sent a message to him. But Lazarus seems to have died soon after the messenger left; for Jesus was only about thirty miles distant from Bethany, or about one day's journey; he delayed his visit for two days; and Lazarus had now been dead four days. Martha did not apprehend that Jesus could repair the evil which had occurred; for she knew not yet that he had power to raise the dead, ver. 24, 39.

22. *Whatsoever thou wilt ask, &c.* Some suppose that Martha thus suggested her belief that Jesus could restore her brother to life, if he would appeal to God for aid. But this seems unlikely, because, when he intimated his intention to perform such a miracle, she

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the evidently did not comprehend his meaning, ver. 23, 24; nor is there any evidence that she had any expectation that her brother would then be raised, until the command was actually uttered, "Lazarus, come forth." She referred to other blessings which Jesus might obtain for them, to comfort them in their affliction.

23. *Thy brother shall rise again.* This assurance, in its ordinary import, is full of consolation to the bereaved. Thank God, when our friends depart, or when we depart from them, by death, we need not sorrow without hope; for he hath given assurance of a resurrection to a glorious immortality, and hath confirmed that assurance by raising his Son from the dead. In our deepest desolation, this ray from heaven may cheer us; and we may look forward with hope and confidence to that blessed reunion in His presence, which shall never again be subject to interruption. In this general sense, Martha evidently understood the assurance of Jesus; and she expressed faith in his word. Yet it is manifest that he referred particularly to the immediate resurrection to mortal life, which was about to be wrought by the divine energy; but she understood him not.

24. *At the last day.* It is not perfectly clear what precise idea was expressed by this phrase, except so far as it relates to a general, or at least a very extensive, simultaneous resurrection. The Jews had an opinion that when the Messiah should appear the dead would be raised; and this period they termed the last day. But, as they supposed his reign on earth should be perpetual, it is not easy to determine what particular period they assigned to the resurrection. Their ideas, indeed, on the whole subject of a resurrection, were vague; and nothing answering to the Christian doctrine of the resurrection was understood, until proclaimed, brought to light, and demonstrated by Jesus himself. Thus much we may understand by the language of Martha; she believed her brother would live again, and in this

resurrection, and the life. he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

she rejoiced; but she viewed the even; as far distant, and therefore her grief was not entirely assuaged.

25. *I am the resurrection and the life.* Some understand this phrase in a sense similar to 2 Tim. i. 10, where it is declared that "our Saviour Jesus Christ—hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Thus Cappe: "You know that I have brought life and immortality to light; and had you duly attended to my doctrine on the subject, you could hardly have been so much agitated and so disconsolate as you are." Others suppose Jesus to have referred to his power to raise the dead, both to a mortal life, as here, and to an immortal life, as in John vi. 39, 40. "I am able to raise the dead to life again, whensoever I please, whether now or hereafter. One that is a believer, and faithful disciple of mine, such as thy brother Lazarus was, I can, though he be dead and buried, raise him presently to life again."—*Hammond*. If the latter construction be adopted, we must observe that Jesus performs the work by that divine energy which the Father imparted; so that it is substantially true, as the scriptures uniformly assert, that God raiseth both Jesus and all mankind from the dead. If the former, then we may understand Jesus to call himself the resurrection and the life, in the same sense in which he calls himself "the way, and the truth, and the life," in John xiv. 6; namely, as the promulgator, and demonstrator, and exemplar of the *truth* and the *resurrection*. He gave an example of the truth, by embodying its principles in his life; and of the resurrection, by being himself brought forth from the dead by the power of God. Truly, in both these important respects, he is well denominated the great High Priest of our profession, and the Captain of our Salvation. Heb. ii. 10; iii. 1.

26. *Whosoever liveth.* He had spoken of the literally dead, and declared that they should live again. He now speaks of them who were still living in the flesh. ¶ *Shall never die.* Of

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard *that*,

course he cannot be understood to mean that such persons should be exempted from natural death; for death hath continued to pass upon all men, believers as well as unbelievers, from that day even until now. The meaning is, that he shall enjoy spiritual life here, and be restored to life hereafter. See John vi. 33, 39, 40. Death to such a one will be disarmed of its terrors; and instead of being feared as death, or an extinction of being, it will rather be cheerfully contemplated as "the gate of endless joy," an introduction to a better life. The phrase, here rendered *never*, is *eis ton aïōna*, (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*), and is by some understood to mean that death shall not be perpetual, but that life shall be restored. In any case, a life beyond natural death is clearly denoted. ¶ *Believest thou this?* That is, do you believe that God has commissioned and empowered me thus to cause the dead to live, and to communicate to the living a life which shall actually have no end? His question seems to embrace his whole address, ver. 25, 26. Perhaps he referred especially to his intimation of power to bestow immediate resurrection; but it may be doubted whether Martha so understood him. See ver. 39, 40.

27. *Yea, Lord, &c.* This is to be understood as a profession of faith in him as the Messiah, and in his doctrine so far as she comprehended it; yet a portion of what he had just said she did not fully understand; and consequently her faith, like that of all disciples in that day, was imperfect though sincere. ¶ *The Christ—world.* "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, he who cometh into the world."—*Campbell*. By this slight variation in rendering, the meaning of the text is more distinctly exhibited. It will be observed, that Martha not only calls Jesus the Messiah, or Christ, but also applies to him

she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She

the other two titles then well understood to denote the same individual; namely, Son of God, and the *coming one*, or he that cometh. See Luke vii. 19, 20. This was a strong profession of her unbounded faith in him.

28. *She went her way.* She left Jesus at a distance from the house, and probably near the grave of Lazarus. See ver. 30. ¶ *Secretly.* Privately; without being overheard by the Jews. Perhaps she feared, if they knew Jesus was near, their anger would be excited, and another scene of violence would occur. John x. 31, 39. ¶ *The Master—calleth for thee.* Probably, he had directed Martha thus to call her sister; but the fact is not mentioned by the evangelist. The word *didaskalos*, (*διδάσκαλος*), here rendered *master*, properly signifies *teacher*, and is so translated, John iii. 2; Rom. ii. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11. A different word is used in Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. Mary readily recognized him by this appellation, by which, it would seem, she and her sister had been accustomed to speak of him.

29. *Arose quickly.* As soon as she knew that Jesus desired her attendance, she hastened to meet him, that she might pour out her sorrows at his feet, and be comforted.

30. *In that place, &c.* Probably not far from the grave; for when Mary went to meet him, the Jews supposed she was going to the grave, and followed her. He went not into the village, that no unnecessary commotion might be excited among the Jews until he should have accomplished the purpose of his journey.

31. *She goeth unto the grave, &c.* Frequent visits were made to the graves or sepulchres of the deceased, during the early days of mourning. Three days, they went to the grave for a double purpose, both to lament, and to ex-



goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also

mine whether any signs of life might possibly have appeared. On the fourth day and afterwards, all hope of returning life was abandoned, and the bereaved wept the more. "It is a tradition of Ben Kaphra's; the very height of mourning is not till the third day. For three days, the spirit wanders about the sepulchre, expecting if it may return into the body. But when it sees that the form or aspect of the face is changed, then it hovers no more, but leaves the body to itself."—*Lightfoot*. Supposing that Mary was approaching the grave, again to bewail her loss, the Jews followed her, that they might join in the lamentation, as was usual.

32. *If thou hadst been here, &c.* See note on ver. 21. It has been well observed, that "if the story had been fictitious, its author would not have ventured to put the same words into the mouths of both the sisters, if he wished to preserve their individuality. But, in fact, the agreement in the language is very natural, because the thought it expressed constantly recurred to their minds, and aggravated their grief. They had, perhaps, said the same thing to each other and to themselves" repeatedly. The identity of expression may therefore be regarded as a confirmation of the truth of the narrative.

33. *He groaned in the spirit, &c.* The original word, rendered *groaned*, often denotes a violent emotion of anger. But it is here to be taken in a milder sense. Jesus possessed the most tender feelings; and he was powerfully moved, greatly agitated, by the grief of his friends. Hammond well expresses the idea, in his paraphrase: "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also which came with her, he was very passionately affected with it, and appeared to be in great perturbation of mind, which soon broke out into tears, ver. 35." ¶ *In the spirit*. In his mind. Acts xix. 21. ¶ *Was troubled*.

weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

Grotius suggests that, as the trouble in our Lord's mind is sufficiently indicated in the former member of the sentence, by this phrase "a change in his countenance is to be understood, by which his mental agitation was manifested."

34. *Where have ye laid him?* Although he who could raise the dead could also know where the dead was, without asking, yet he chose this natural method of leading the company to the grave.

35. *Jesus wept.* It is a common remark, that this is the shortest verse in the Bible. It is also one of the most important; for herein the strong and fervent love of Jesus was manifested. Will he who wept over human woe on earth, though he knew the mourning would soon be changed to rejoicing,—will he quietly contemplate the endless woe of those for whom he labored and died? God forbid. The compassionate Jesus labored for all, and died for all; and he will be satisfied with nothing short of the salvation of all, as the fruit of the travail of his soul. Isa. liii. 11. Various conjectures have been offered concerning the special cause why Jesus wept; some supposing he wept in consequence of sin; others, that his tears flowed at the contemplation of his own approaching sufferings for sin; and others assigning still different reasons. But the most natural and obvious cause may more properly be regarded as the true one. He wept in sympathy with others. His tears were the expression of that christian sympathy which the apostle exhorts his brethren to cultivate; "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Rom. xii. 15. In connexion with this thrilling incident, the remark of Bulfinch is worthy of consideration: "Powerful as was the evidence of raising the dead to life, the evidence of those holy tears speaks more impressively. Tears are the language of truth. An impostor never

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

wept, at the moment of perpetrating a deception."

36. *Behold how he loved him!* The Jews did not doubt the sincerity of our Lord's emotion. They attributed it to his love for the dead rather than his sympathy with the living. But he knew that Lazarus would soon live again; we cannot therefore well suppose that he bemoaned his loss. The grief of the sisters was actual and intense; and this it was which moved him.

37. *Some of them said, &c.* Their question was natural. They admitted that he had performed a miracle, and rightly judged that he had power to perform others. But the prevention of death would not have produced so strong an impression as the restoration of life. He preferred the latter, that the evidence of his Messiahship might be more conclusive.

38. *It was a cave.* Caves, either natural or artificial, were much used by the Jews as sepulchres. See Gen. xxv. 9, 10; xlix. 29—31; notes on Matt. viii. 28; xxvii. 60. ¶ *A stone lay upon it.* "Shut up with a stone."—*Campbell.* The entrance, whether at the top or on the side, was closed in the customary manner by a stone, that ravenous beasts might not enter.

39. *Four days.* Martha seems not to have suspected the true design of Jesus; she supposed he intended to enter the cave that he might once more behold the face of the dead, and suggested that, as life had so long been extinct, the body must be in an offensive state. The reality of the miracle is the more apparent, as so long an interval elapsed between the departure and restoration of life.

40 Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me:

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

40. *Said I not, &c.* See ver. 23—26. Jesus had intimated his intention to raise Lazarus, though Martha did not comprehend his meaning. ¶ *Glory of God.* That is, a display of his power and goodness in the miracle about to be wrought.

41. *Lifted up his eyes.* In an attitude of prayer. Though we know that God is not confined to any particular place, but pervades the universe, and that his spirit is truly around, and about, and within us, yet, when addressing him, it is natural to elevate the eyes from earth to heaven; and it is well to do so, in token of our consciousness that he is above us, infinitely above us, in power, and goodness, and dignity. ¶ *I thank thee, &c.* "It is possible that John has recorded here only the sum or substance of the prayer on this occasion. The thanks which Jesus renders here are evidently in view of the fact that power had been committed to him to raise up Lazarus."—*Barnes.*

42. *I knew, &c.* Jesus both knew that God had imparted to him this divine energy, and that his gratitude was known to God. It needed not that he should utter his thanksgivings audibly. ¶ *But because of the people, &c.* He would not leave a suspicion in their minds that he wrought such a miracle by his own power, or by magic, and therefore publicly acknowledged that this power was bestowed on him by God, and expressed his gratitude for the gift. He had a further purpose, which is immediately announced. ¶ *That they may believe, &c.* While he would not have them render undue honor to him, as though by his own power he wrought the miracle, (Acts iii. 12,) he desired

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which

that they should recognize him as a messenger from God, the Messiah. By this public appeal, answered as it was in a most remarkable manner, he would fix their attention not only on the miracle itself, but on the evidence it afforded of his divine mission. See 1 Kings xviii. 24, 36, 37; John iii. 2.

43. *Loud voice.* He did not mutter, like those who professed to perform wonders by incantations and spells. But with a distinct, full, and audible voice, that the whole company there assembled might clearly understand him, he uttered the words which penetrated even the dull ears of death. ¶ *Lazarus, come forth.* His language here, as on similar occasions, was concise and energetic. See Luke vii. 14; viii. 54. He used not a multitude of words, to distract the attention of the people, as in feats of jugglery; but he spake as one having authority, Matt. vii. 29; and the result was seen to correspond precisely with the import of his words.

44. *He that was dead.* The same person in the same body, which had been dead, became alive. Whatever may be the fact in regard to the immortal resurrection, in the few cases of resurrection recorded in the scriptures the identical body which died was re-animated. ¶ *Bound hand and foot, &c.* As the Jews used no coffins, they were accustomed to envelope the deceased body in a long roll of linen cloth, wrapped around it from head to foot, and effectually confining or *binding* the limbs. When a body was embalmed, a more elaborate process of bandaging was practised. In this case, the embalming seems to have been omitted. ¶ *Loose him, &c.* It is evident that he could not walk, when thus tightly swathed. Perhaps the body was placed, as was customary, in a niche or recess upon the side of the cave, at some little elevation from the floor. When life re-

came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees; and told them what things Jesus had done.

47 ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

turned, he might rise from his recumbent posture, and, throwing his lower limbs over the edge of the recess, might assume a standing position, even before he was released from his bonds. There is no evidence that he walked, nor reason to believe he did so, until he was *loosed*, or had his limbs liberated. The spectators might have been so surprised and astounded at the miracle, that no one attempted to render this service until specially directed by Jesus to do so. He was not surprised or confused. Nothing unexpected by him had occurred. With perfect self-possession and dignity, he gave the necessary directions.

45. *Many of the Jews—believed.* This was the designed as well as the natural result of the miracle, ver. 41, 42. The evidence was apparently irresistible. The fact of the miracle was undeniable, and was not denied, ver. 47. And not only did it manifest divine power, in itself, but it followed a direct appeal of Jesus to God for aid. Impositors are not accustomed to offer solemn prayer to God, when about to practise deception.

46. *But some of them, &c.* The evangelist does not hesitate to acknowledge, (and herein is evidence of his honesty and the truth of his narrative,) that some of the Jews were so blinded by prejudice and hardened in unbelief, that they resisted even this conclusive evidence of our Lord's Messiahship. Thus true it is, that, as the same heat will melt iron and harden clay, so the same evidence will convince some and confirm the unbelief of others. ¶ *To the Pharisees.* The Sanhedrim. The intelligence was communicated, not that the Pharisees might believe, but that they might apprehend Jesus.

47. *A council.* An assembly or convocation of the Sanhedrim. ¶ *What do we? What are we doing, or what can*

48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should

we do, to arrest the progress of this delusion? for they persisted in the belief or pretence that Jesus was an impostor, and the people were deluded by fraud. ¶ *Doeth many miracles.* They could not deny the fact that he wrought miracles. Why, then, did they not acknowledge him as a divine messenger? I do not recollect to have seen an answer to this question which goes so far to exculpate them, as the following: "It may be answered, that they did not doubt that *impostors* might work miracles. See Matt. xxiv. 24. To this opinion they were led, probably, by the wonders which the magicians performed in Egypt, Exo. vii., viii., and by the passage in Deut. xiii. 1. As they regarded the tendency of the doctrines of Jesus to draw off the people from the worship of God, and from keeping his law, John ix. 16, they did not suppose themselves bound to follow him, even if he did work miracles."—*Barnes*. This would seem to place their conduct in a more favorable light, and I would gladly adopt it in full. Yet it must not be forgotten that Jesus pronounced them inexcusable for their unreasonable resistance of the evidence furnished by his word and his works. John xv. 22, 24.

48. *All men.* The Jews generally. His doctrine will be universally or very extensively embraced by the people. ¶ *Romans shall come, &c.* The Jews were then under the government of Rome. They professed to believe, if the people should generally acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, he would attempt to seize the government, commotions would ensue, and the Roman government would destroy the nation as the penalty of rebellion. It is singular, that they should themselves reject Jesus, because he *would not* assume the character of a temporal ruler, (see note on Matt. iv. 8—10,) and yet attempt to

die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

destroy his life lest he *should* assume such a character. It is also deserving of notice, that the very calamity befell them, in consequence of rejecting him, which they vainly hoped by this means to avoid. ¶ *Our place.* Our territory, or city, or temple, as different commentators interpret it. The idea seems to be this: lest the Romans come and utterly destroy us. They intimated that exemplary vengeance would be inflicted for the crime of rebellion and treason.

49. *Caiaphas.* See note on Luke iii. 2. ¶ *Ye know nothing at all.* That is, in regard to this matter. Some of the Sanhedrim were probably inclined to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. See John vii. 50, 51; xii. 42. Others alleged that this would be treasonable, and would incur the vengeance of Rome. Caiaphas told them they were unwise to discuss this question: the whole difficulty could be removed at once, and all danger averted from the nation.

50. *It is expedient for us.* Beneficial, profitable. ¶ *That one man should die, &c.* This was the measure which he proposed, to avert the danger which was apprehended. Let Jesus be put to death, and the whole commotion will subside. Guilty or innocent, true prophet or impostor, it is expedient that he should die, rather than the nation be destroyed. His language was capable of another sense, and is consequently represented as prophetic in ver. 51, 52. But as he used the phrase, he intended only that, as a measure of political policy, it was desirable to destroy Jesus, the cause of all this commotion: and thus and thus only was he understood by the council, as is evident from ver. 53.

51, 52. *This spake he not of himself* He doubtless said what he intended to say. But the prophetic import of his language he neither intended nor perceived. He designed to procure a cold-

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

55 ¶ And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand : and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem

blooded murder, for purposes of state policy. But God so ordered the manner of his speech, that he actually prophesied a glorious event. "The evangelist explains, in these two verses, that the high-priest did not, intentionally, or of himself, utter a prophecy, but that in his office of high-priest, gifted with such high and sacred authority as added weight to his words, he inadvertently, without meaning it, and without being a genuine prophet, had uttered a true prediction respecting the death of Jesus, as it afterwards turned out. For he did actually die, not for the Jews only, 'but for the benefit of the whole world, who, by becoming Christians, are united under one Head, and brought to join in the worship of the one living and true God.'"—*Livermore*. ¶ *Not for that nation only, &c.* "This verse is no part of what Caiaphas said, but is John's remark upon his speech ; as if John had said, He is to die indeed, but not for the nation of the Jews only ; he is to die for all the world. See 1 John ii. 2."—*Pearce*. It should not be overlooked, that, in whatever manner the destiny of mankind is affected by the death of Christ, it is uniformly represented in the scriptures that all are equally interested in it. The terms used are general, comprehensive, universal, in their import. See, for example, John xii. 32 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; Heb. ii. 9 ; 1 John ii. 2.

53. *Took counsel, &c.* It would seem an easy matter, to put him to death ; but it was necessary to do it privately, or first to persuade the people that he was an impostor. See note on Matt. xxvi. 16.

54. *Walked no more openly.* Appeared no more in public, for a season, but retired into a place near the wilderness, where he remained until the next passover, when he again went to Jeru-

salem more openly than ever before, John xii. 12—15, and there finished the work assigned him. ¶ *Wilderness.* See note on Matt. iii. 1. ¶ *Ephraim.* A place supposed to have been situated near the Jordan in the land of Ephraim, mentioned 2 Chron. xiii. 19.

56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast !

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

55. *Jews' passover.* This manner of naming the feast indicates that John wrote chiefly for the information of persons not familiar with Jewish customs. For some account of the passover, see note on Matt. xxvi. 2. ¶ *Purify themselves.* That is, from any legal or ceremonial uncleanness which they might have contracted. See 2 Chron. xxx. 17, 18. See also John xviii. 28, where those Jews who were seeking to destroy an innocent person and were ready to imprecate upon themselves and their children the guilt of shedding his blood, were nevertheless cautious against contracting any legal uncleanness or defilement which might hinder them from eating the passover.

56, 57. *That he will not come, &c.* They had resolved to destroy him, and had given commandment that the earliest information of his arrival should be communicated, that they might take him. But they became apprehensive that he would abstain from the feast, and thus escape the snare ; and, with the uneasiness natural to the guilty, they suggested their doubts to each other. They failed to appreciate his character, in this respect, as well as in others. Until his work was completed, he did not unnecessarily expose his life ; he retired before the persecuting fury of his adversaries, in like manner as he directed his disciples to do, Matt. x. 23. But when the appointed hour came, he was ready ; and, keenly as he dreaded the approaching agony, he met it with fortitude. When he entered Jerusalem

## CHAPTER XII.

**T**HEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disci-

for this last time, he entered not secretly, but attended by *much people*. John xii. 12. It was perfectly easy to find him; and the Jews did find him, and speedily filled the cup of their own iniquity.

## CHAPTER XII.

1—8. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 6—13; Mark xiv. 8; Luke vii. 36—50.

1. *Bethany*. About two miles from Jerusalem. See note on Matt. xxi. 1.

2. *A supper*. The other evangelists say that Jesus "sat at meat," when the events occurred which are here narrated; at the house of "Simon the leper," Matt. xxvi. 6, or Simon a Pharisee, Luke vii. 36, 40. ¶ *Lazarus was one, &c.* From the fact that Lazarus and Martha are thus mentioned, Theophylact conjectures that Simon was their father; but others conclude differently, from the same fact, and say they "are mentioned because it was not in their own house, but in that of Simon."—*Barnes*. If the account in Luke be parallel with this, as is certainly very probable, we cannot well suppose that Simon was the father of Lazarus and his sisters, as no intimation is given that she who had been a *sinner* was his daughter. It is more probable that Simon was a neighbor to Lazarus, who was invited as a friend of Jesus, and that Martha kindly volunteered to assist in *serving* the guests.

4. *Which should betray*. That is,

ples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake

who *would* and who did betray his Master.

6. *He was a thief, &c.* The thirst of gold was the besetting sin of Judas. Even while daily listening to the personal instructions of Jesus, so strong was his passion for money, that he abstracted from the common stock entrusted to his charge, a portion of what was designed for the supply of their common wants, or for distribution to the poor. And, at last, it pierced him through with many sorrows, by inducing him to betray his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. ¶ *The bag*. It was customary for travellers in the East, to carry provisions for their journey, in a bag or knapsack. But the word here seems rather to denote the purse for money; which contained the contributions offered by those who were friendly to Jesus and his disciples. And, from what is said in ver. 5, it would seem that they were accustomed to distribute a portion of their scanty stock to the poor.

9. *That they might see Lazarus*. The fact of his resurrection had become widely known; and it was natural that the Jews should desire to see him. We may well suppose, also, they desired to learn from him, what he had heard and seen in the world of spirits. But on this point, the scriptures are silent. It is worthy of remark, that none of those who were restored to life by our Saviour are recorded to have made any communication whatever, concerning their condition between the departure and res-

only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 ¶ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death ;

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 ¶ On the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna ; Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the

toration of life. By some, this fact is regarded as evidence that, during this interval, they were in an unconscious state. But many reasons might have existed for their silence on this point, which are not communicated to us. The language of the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 4, may suggest one of those reasons :—he speaks of one who “ was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” If it were improper to disclose what was thus witnessed by a living man, may we not easily conceive that it was equally or more improper to disclose the secrets of the spiritual world ? and, indeed, that mortal ears could not have comprehended the import of such disclosures ? In my judgment, the fact that men are or are not conscious of existence between death and the resurrection cannot be determined by the silence of them who were raised by our Lord ; for such silence may be consistent with either condition.

10, 11. *Put Lazarus also to death.* So determined were the chief priests and Pharisees to reject Jesus, and cause the people to regard him as an impostor. To effect this purpose, they would not hesitate to destroy the life of Lazarus, who was not even accused of guilt, partly to remove from the people the living evidence of the miracle performed by Jesus, and partly, perhaps, to show that they were more powerful than he, by destroying the life which he had restored. But whatever may

name of the Lord.

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon, as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Sion : behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first : but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

have chiefly moved them, we have an illustration in their conduct of the progressive character of sinfulness. It leads men on, step by step, to the commission of crimes which at first were not contemplated. No man, when he takes the first step in iniquity, can foresee what his final step will be. Could he see the end from the beginning, he would shrink back in horror, at the hideous prospect. 2 Kings viii. 13. The only path of safety is that of purity and righteousness. Whoso departs from it, even though he design only a single step on forbidden ground, takes the hazard of placing his foot in the miry clay and sinking into a horrible pit. Ps. xl. 2.

12—19. See notes on Matt. xxi. 1—16. See also Mark xi. 1—11 ; Luke xix. 29—43.

16. *These things were written, &c.* See note on Matt. xxi. 4, 5. The disciples were not aware, at the time, that they were thus fulfilling a prophecy. But after Jesus was glorified, that is after he had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, they perceived that this prophecy, as well as others had been accomplished in him. A similar instance is recorded John ii. 19—22.

17, 18. *Bare record.* Or, testimony. They testified that this was he who raised the dead ; and doubtless urged this as a reason for believing on him as the Messiah, and receiving him with acclamations as the King of Zion. And their testimony produced its natura-

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

20 ¶ And there were certain

effect. Many people gathered, in consequence of knowing that he who performed such miracles was the same who was now entering Jerusalem in triumph. They were ready to receive him as a temporal deliverer, and shout his praises as a Prince who should break the yoke of bondage. But Jesus clearly foresaw that the crown of glory which awaited him was not an earthly crown. He saw that, in entering Jerusalem, he went to his throne; but that he must ascend it by the cross. He saw that the same populace, now ready to conduct him in triumph as a king, would soon conduct him ignominiously as a malefactor, and exclaim "crucify him," as loudly as they now shouted "hosanna." Yet he advanced with calmness and fortitude.

19. *Prevail nothing.* All previous efforts to crush the gospel had been unavailing. The people more and more manifested a disposition to flock around Jesus, listen to his instructions, and believe on him as the Messiah. ¶ *The world, &c.* Every body is running after him. At this rate, we shall soon be entirely deserted, and the whole nation will acknowledge him as a religious teacher. This exclamation indicates the rage and desperation of the Pharisees. And the outburst of popular feeling stimulated them to adopt without further hesitation the suggestion of Caiaphas, John xi. 50; and they soon afterwards accomplished their bloody purpose. But, as often happens to the wicked, instead of crushing what they so feared and detested, by crucifying Jesus, they completed what was lacking for the firm establishment of the gospel, and brought swift destruction upon their own heads.

20. Immediately after Jesus entered Jerusalem, as before narrated, Matthew tells us he went into the temple, and purified it by driving out those who resorted there for traffic. Matt. xxi. 12--16. See also Mark xi. 15--18; Luke

xix. 45--48. From Mark's account, it

Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the feast.

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and

would seem that this scene in the temple occurred on the next day after the entry into Jerusalem. But John omits it entirely, unless, as some suppose, his description is inserted out of place, in ch. ii. 13--17. ¶ *Certain Greeks.* The Jews often gave the general name of Greeks to all the Gentiles, as those with whom they chiefly had intercourse used the Greek language. Some suppose these were actually Greeks or Gentiles. Others are of opinion that they were Jews who had long dwelt among the Greeks and used their language. That the Jews were extensively spread abroad among other nations, at that time, is manifest from the Epistles addressed to them. See also Acts ii. 5.

21. *We would see Jesus.* Their curiosity was natural. The miracles wrought by him arrested their attention, and they desired to see and hear for themselves, that they might learn the character of him who was endowed with such power. It does not distinctly appear whether their wish was gratified but it seems probable that it was, inasmuch as Jesus was not accustomed to slight the requests of honest inquirers; see also ver. 29. It is manifest from ver. 34, that some besides his disciples were present; and no good reason can be assigned why the unbelieving Jews should hear this discourse, and the well-disposed Greeks or Grecian Jews be prohibited from listening also.

22. *Telleth Andrew, &c.* From Philip's apparent hesitation to make the request on his individual responsibility, it would seem probable that those who are here called Greeks were actually Gentiles; he might doubt whether it were proper that they should be admitted to what was then regarded as the exclusive privilege of Jews. Yet it is not improbable that his hesitation may have had a different cause. Jesus had just entered Jerusalem in triumph, hailed by the people as a king. The apostles, in common with the whole nation, expected the Messiah would establish



Philip tell Jesus.

23 ¶ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

a glorious temporal kingdom. They doubtless supposed that Jesus had now assumed his true character, and taken upon himself the name and office of King. They would thus regard him with additional awe and veneration. And Philip might have been thus moved to doubt whether Jesus, in his royal character, would condescend to admit strangers to an interview. Encouraged, however, by the consent of Andrew, and accompanied by him, he made the request.

23. *Jesus answered, &c.* This answer may be understood to have special reference to the expectation of the disciples, mentioned in the preceding note. As if he had said, You suppose I am now about to be glorified by entering into possession of a temporal kingdom; I am, indeed, to be glorified, but in a far different manner; for, first of all, I am to be crucified. The discourse which follows was well suited to draw off their attention from the visions of earthly glory which so brilliantly floated before their eyes. ¶ *The hour, &c.* The time. See note on John v. 25. ¶ *Glorified.* That is, by being manifested as the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead and ascension into glory.

24. *I say unto you, &c.* A similar comparison is used, and somewhat amplified, by the apostle, to illustrate the subject of the resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 36—38. ¶ *Corn of wheat.* A kernel of grain. What is true of wheat, in this respect, is true of other kinds of grain. ¶ *Fall into the ground.* Be sown or planted, at such depth as to receive moisture from the earth and heat from the sun. ¶ *And die.* "This was according to the philosophy of those days."—Pearce. In point of fact, if the living germ of the grain perish, vegetation does not take place, and no fruit is produced. But the scriptures are not designed to teach natural phi-

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

losophy with exactness. It is sufficient for us, that they teach moral and spiritual truth clearly and infallibly. Nevertheless, it is true that the planted grain does die in the earth, all except the germ, and the decomposition of the body furnishes the earliest sustenance to the plant, until it is sufficiently developed to draw nourishment from the earth. It is a striking indication of divine providence, that, in all the processes of reproduction, that which produces furnishes sustenance to that which is produced, in its embryo state, and until it is fitted to receive nourishment from other sources. ¶ *Abideth alone.* Is unproductive. The point of the illustration is, that as the fruitfulness of grain is secured only through the death or decomposition of the seed sown, so the glorification of Jesus could not be perfected, according to the divine plan, except through his death, as preparatory to his resurrection and ascension.

25. *He that loveth his life, &c.* See note on Matt. x. 39. "This was a favorite principle, a sort of axiom, with the Lord Jesus, which he applied to himself as well as to his followers."—Barnes. He seems here to apply this rule to himself, and to mean that he was willing to sacrifice his own life in the cause of truth and holiness, even as he elsewhere required of his disciples.

26. *Serve me.* Obey me; be my disciple in deed and in truth. ¶ *Let him follow me.* Let him imitate me. As the discourse here has respect to the approaching sufferings and death of Jesus, he must be understood as referring particularly to an imitation of himself in meeting even death with cheerfulness, rather than prove treacherous to the cause committed to his hands. ¶ *Where I am, &c.* Faithfulness even unto death should not be disadvantageous; for the faithful would enjoy Christ's spiritual presence here, and

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

his actual presence forever. ¶ *Honor.* Approve and reward as a faithful disciple. From the whole verse, we learn, (1.) that no man can be regarded as a true disciple of Christ, unless he imitates his example; and, (2.) that it is the interest as well as the duty of men thus to imitate him, inasmuch as the faithful shall receive an abundant reward, in a sensible communion with Jesus, and a consciousness of divine approval.

27. *Troubled.* See note on John xi. 33. A vivid picture of his approaching agony being thus called up before the mind of our Lord, he was sensibly affected. Though, from first to last, he maintained a steady resolve to finish the work committed to him, and to be obedient even unto death, yet a careful reader of the scriptures cannot have failed to notice, that he trembled with the keenest sensibility at the prospect of his approaching fate, and its contemplation sometimes excited his feelings even to agony. See Luke xxii. 42—44. See also notes on Matt. iv. 1—11. We witness a like manifestation of feeling here. We may perhaps without impropriety apply to him the language he addressed to his disciples; his spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak. Matt. xxvi. 41. He had no intention to shrink from his fate; yet he could not look upon it without shuddering. ¶ *What shall I say?* This question indicates the extremity of our Lord's trouble. The sufferings and death which had appeared dreadful, when viewed at a distance, and which had caused him much anxiety even from the commencement of his ministry, assumed a more appalling aspect as they approached so very closely. He was in a strait between two, and confessed that his soul was troubled. ¶ *Father, save me from this hour.* That is, from this scene of terrible anguish. Griesbach and others read this interrogatively. And thus Campbell translates: "What shall I say? [shall I say,] Father, save me from this hour?" By this method of interpretation Jesus is understood to query whether it would be proper to make such a request of his Father. This may be the meaning; but it seems

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

more natural to interpret this place like Matt. xxvi. 39, 42; Luke xxii. 42. In the extremity of his trouble he prayed for deliverance; but immediately checked himself, and professed his readiness to drink the cup prepared for him, however bitter, John xviii. 11. ¶ *But for this cause, &c.* That is, I came into the world, not only to proclaim the riches of God's grace, to make known the way of righteousness and illustrate it by a perfect example, but also to suffer and die. "As if he had said; but I retract that prayer, for I have lived to this time on this very account. The trouble of his soul made Jesus here pray, and then unsay it again, as in Matt. xxvi. 39, and Mark xiv. 36."—*Pearce.* This scene must have produced a powerful effect on the minds of the disciples. And when they were afterwards called to lay down their lives for Christ's sake and the gospel's, they received strength by the remembrance of his struggle and victory. He had as keen a sense of suffering as they; he shrunk from it as sensitively as they; yet, with a firm reliance on divine grace, and with a true spirit of obedience, he encountered the trial, drank the cup prepared by his Father, and entered into glory. Having this perfect example before their eyes, they might with the more fortitude imitate their Master, ver. 26, trusting that the same God who sustained him would also sustain them, and make them more than conquerors through him that loved them. Rom. viii. 37.

28. *Glorify thy name.* Let thy name be glorified in the full accomplishment of thy purposes. "I am willing to bear any trials. I will not shrink from any sufferings. Let thy name be honored, let thy character, wisdom, goodness, and plans of mercy, be manifested and promoted, whatever sufferings it may cost me."—*Barnes.* The idea is similar to that expressed by our Lord in the garden; his intense agony having forced from him a prayer for deliverance, he immediately and submissively added, "nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." Luke xxii. 42. ¶ *Have both glorified—will glorify, &c.* The

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered. Others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said,

meaning seems to be this;—I have glorified my name, or myself, already, by enabling thee to impart to mankind a knowledge of my character and will, and to unfold to them their own duty and the glorious destiny which awaits them; and by enabling thee also to perform such miracles as furnish a conclusive attestation to your divine mission. I will again or further glorify it, by raising thee from the dead, and thus demonstrating thee to be the Son of God, and thy doctrine to be divine truth; and by receiving thee to myself and empowering thee to reign until all intelligences shall confess thee to be Lord, to my glory. Rom. i. 4; Phil. ii. 8—11.

29. *The people.* That is, some of them. *Others* expressed a different opinion. Concerning audible attestations from heaven, see Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 17, 18. ¶ *It thundered.* Though the words were uttered distinctly, in the sudden surprise which such an event must necessarily occasion, the sound might easily be mistaken by many for thunder. ¶ *An angel spake, &c.* Many of the Jews were of opinion that God did not speak directly to men, but communicated his will by the ministry of angels; hearing this voice from heaven, they regarded it as a divine communication, but, as usual, supposed the speaker to be an angel. Wetstein suggests a different interpretation of this passage. He supposes a portion of the hearers were Greeks, who did not understand the language used by the Jews; and the voice from heaven, uttering that language, was unintelligible to them, and was therefore regarded as thunder; but the Jews, who well understood it, said an angel spake.

30. *Not because of me, &c.* I needed not this testimony; for I know that God loves me and will glorify me and himself in me. But you are thus more fully assured that I am the servant and Son of God, and that my instructions and example deserve your utmost regard. See John xi. 42.

31. *Now is the judgment of this world.* The word *krisis*, (κρίσις,) here

This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

rendered judgment, might perhaps be more accurately understood, in this place, if merely clothed in its English form, *crisis*, and left untranslated. It is allowed on all hands, that Jesus did not mean that sentence of condemnation was then pronounced upon the world. But a *crisis* had come, when light should triumph over darkness, good over evil. His death, then near at hand, was the crowning means, by which this result was to be accomplished. Thenceforth, the cause of truth and holiness was to become triumphant over falsehood and ungodliness, gradually overthrowing every opposition, until all should be purified and gathered to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, according to the assurance in ver. 32. See Heb. xii.

2. ¶ *Prince of this world be cast out.* Many have understood this as referring to a personal devil. But, apart from the impropriety of representing God and the devil as striving for the mastery with such equal and dubious success, that the event of the struggle was not decided until the end of four thousand years,—it seems much more natural and consistent with other scriptures to interpret this passage like Luke x. 18. It is not unusual, in the scriptures, thus to personify good or evil principles. See Prov. viii., ix. See also note on Luke x. 18. Some refer this to the reigning powers, who opposed Jesus and his gospel, and think their overthrow is denoted. But, in my judgment, the reference is more abstract and general. In ver. 32, the general gathering of mankind is promised, which presupposes the eradication of sinfulness in the hearts of men, and their conversion to holiness; in other words, such a triumph of holiness over evil, as is noticed in the former part of this note. Moreover, some light may be shed on our Lord's meaning, by comparing Heb. ii. 14, with 1 Cor. xv. 56. Hence it appears, that the *devil*, or the cause, *power*, or *sting*, of death, which was destroyed through the death of Christ, was *sin*. And this well agrees with the supposition that the casting out of the prince of this world, through our Lord's

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me

33 (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?

death, denotes the destruction of sinfulness, or of all evil, and the firm establishment of holiness ; or the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, as before stated. Then, the great crisis occurred. It was no longer doubtful, to the eye of faith, what should be the result of the protracted struggle between the antagonistic elements of good and evil.

32. *Lifted up.* Crucified. See ver. 33 ; John iii. 14 ; viii. 28. ¶ *Will draw all men unto me.* See John vi. 44, 45 ; Eph. i. 9, 10. By drawing men to himself Jesus undoubtedly referred to their purification from sinfulness, and their being made to bear his own moral image. And this, he declares, shall be the result of his death, in regard to all men. Such is an appropriate result of the labor which he thus finished. For he came to be the Saviour of the world, John iii. 17 ; 1 John iv. 14 ; of the persons in the world who are sinners, Matt. i. 21 ; Rom. v. 8 ; 1 Tim. i. 15 ; and, agreeably with this design, he endured death on behalf of all, without exception, 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; Heb. ii. 9 ; 1 John ii. 2. It is proper to conclude, that all will share in the benefit, in God's own time ; be gathered in Christ, conformed to his image, purified from sin, and made partakers of endless holiness and happiness. This is the final consummation of the triumph of holiness over sinfulness, or good over evil, referred to in ver. 31.

33. *What death.* The manner of his death ; namely, by crucifixion.

34. *Out of the law, &c.* Rather, we have been so taught by the interpreters of the law. It is not revealed in the law that the Messiah should dwell forever on the earth. His kingdom is represented as of indefinite duration ; and as the Jews could not conceive of a spiritual kingdom, so intently were they

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you : for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

looking for earthly glory, they concluded that he must dwell on the earth while he continued to reign. Hence their interpretation of the scriptures that the Messiah would never die. Hence arose that expectation, which pervaded the whole mass of the people, that the Messiah could not die, and which rendered even the apostles unable to understand Jesus, when he mentioned his death and resurrection. See note, end of Matt. xxviii. ¶ *Abideth forever.* Liveth forever ; is immortal on the earth. ¶ *How sayest thou, &c.* Intimating that his testimony was contrary to the scriptures. ¶ *Who is this Son of man?* Either ignorantly or wilfully, they represented him as asserting concerning himself what was not true concerning the Messiah ; and they may be understood to demand in what sense he called himself the Son of man.

35, 36. Without giving a direct answer to their question, Jesus exhorted the people to believe on him, and walk by his light. The idea here expressed is similar to that in John ix. 4, 5. He intimated, that he should soon depart, and they would stumble and fall. ¶ *A little while.* The light will soon be removed. I shall remain, to give personal instructions, but a short time. ¶ *Walk, &c.* Improve the time which remains, and avail yourselves of the advantages you now enjoy. John xi. 9. ¶ *Lest darkness, &c.* Lest the light be extinguished before you have completed your task, and you grope the remainder of your way in darkness. This darkness soon brooded over that unhappy nation, and they miserably perished. ¶ *Believe in the light.* Namely, the Messiah, the "light of the world." John viii. 12. ¶ *Children of light.* Those whose minds are illuminated by the true light, and whose hearts are purified by faith. Eph. v. 8. ¶ *Dù' hide*

37 ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him :

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that

they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

42 ¶ Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue :

43 For they loved the praise of

&c. He probably retired to Bethany, where he generally spent the night, during this his last visit to Jerusalem. Mark xi. 11; Luke xxi. 37; John xii. 1.

37. *So many miracles.* This refers to his miracles generally; it is not asserted that he had performed any miracle during this conversation. ¶ *Believed not.* They evaded the force of this evidence, by ascribing his miracles to magic or to Beelzebub. See notes on Matt. xii. 24; John xi. 47.

33. *Might be fulfilled.* See Isa. liii. 1. We are not to understand that the Jews disbelieved, in order to fulfil or verify the language of the prophet. But by their unbelief, this language became applicable to them. As the fathers rejected Isaiah and slew him, so their children rejected and crucified Jesus. What was true of one, was equally true of the other. See note on Matt. ii. 15. ¶ *Our report.* Our testimony, or message. This interrogation is equivalent to an assertion that the *report* was rejected. ¶ *Arm of the Lord.* The divine power, which is frequently denoted by this figure. Ps. xcvi. 1; Isa. xl. 10, 11; lxiii. 12; Acts xiii. 17. ¶ *Revealed.* Made known. The word here seems to indicate not merely declaring the truth, but impressing it upon the mind. The power of God was displayed or declared in his Son's miracles; but it was not so impressed on the minds of the Jewish rulers as to be perceived by them in its true character. They were so blinded that they received not the revelation. Thus a flood of light may be poured upon a blind man, and yet he is not illuminated because his eyes are sightless.

39, 40. *They could not believe, &c.*

The reason is assigned; their eyes were blinded, and their heart hardened. See note on Matt. xiii. 14. That this was a criminal blindness, is not to be disputed. And it is equally indisputable, that it was ordained by God, for a benevolent and gracious purpose. See the apostle's argument, Rom. xi. 7—12, 25—32.

41. *These things said Esaias, &c.* See Isa. vi. 9, 10. ¶ *When he saw his glory, &c.* That is, the glory of God, who commissioned him as a prophet, to deliver a message which the blinded and hardened Jews rejected, even as their sinful children rejected the message subsequently communicated by his Son. Isa. vi. 1—8. Some suppose the evangelist identifies the "Lord of hosts," seen by Isaiah, with the Lord Jesus Christ. But this supposition has no support from the text. The reference by the prophet is to the Father; and the evangelist quotes him in the same sense: showing that because the Father, for wise purposes, had blinded the Jews, therefore they rejected his Son. ¶ *Spake of him.* "Namely, of his blinding their eyes and darkening their hearts."—Wakefield.

42, 43. *The chief rulers.* Members of the Sanhedrim. Some, even of these, could not resist the evidence afforded by the miracles of Jesus, and they believed on him. ¶ *Pharisees.* A majority of the Sanhedrim was composed of this sect. These rejected him; and, being a majority, and having power to inflict the highest and most disgraceful ecclesiastical censure, they were feared by the minority, who believed, but dared not confess Jesus. ¶ *Put out of the synagogue.* Excom-

men more than the praise of God.

44 ¶ Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me :

45 And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that rejecteth me, and

receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting : whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

municated. See note on John ix. 22. ¶ *Loved the praise of men more, &c.* See John v. 44. It does not appear how many of the rulers smothered their faith, through fear that they should forfeit their reputation with the people. Nicodemus and Joseph may be reckoned as two of them. Mark xv. 43 ; Luke xxiii. 50, 51 ; John iii. 1 ; xix. 38, 39.

44. *Jesus—said.* The evangelist does not distinctly inform us *when* this was said. Some suppose it was a continuation of the foregoing discourse ; but if so, it is inserted out of place. See ver. 36. Others consider the remaining portion of this chapter as a general description of our Lord's manner of teaching. It would seem more probable, however, that it is an abstract of a particular discourse ; at what time delivered is not of material consequence. ¶ *He that believeth, &c.* That is, he believeth not only on me, but on him that sent me ; or, he believeth not so much on me, as on him that sent me. See note on John vii. 16.

45 *He that seeth me, &c.* God was manifested in Jesus, by his power and grace. He enabled him to speak with divine wisdom, and to display divine energy in his miracles. In character, he constituted and preserved him holy, harmless and undefiled. He filled his bosom with his own spirit of love to mankind. So that, in all his words, and all his works, he was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. John iii. 2 ; vii. 46 ; Heb. i. 3 ; vii. 26. Thus those who saw him saw the Father. See John xiv. 9—11.

46. *A light, &c.* See notes on John i. 9 ; viii. 12. ¶ *Abide in darkness.*

Remain under the dominion of ignorance and sin. See notes on John iii. 19—21 ; viii. 12.

47, 48. *Believe not, &c.* See notes on John iii. 17 ; v. 45, 46 ; viii. 15. He had given such conclusive evidence of his divine mission, that they were without excuse, who rejected him. John xv. 22, 24. And as Moses would condemn them, or, in other words, as the testimony of Moses, which they professed to believe but actually rejected, would condemn them, John v. 45—47, so the testimony of Jesus would condemn them, inasmuch as it so distinctly bore the impress of divine truth, and was attested by a clear manifestation of divine power. This condemnation they must endure, John iii. 18—21. But even from this state of condemnation they should finally be delivered ; for Jesus came to *save the world*.

49. *I have not spoken of myself, &c.* See notes on John vii. 16—18.

50. *His commandment is life everlasting.* "Is the cause or source of everlasting life. He that obeys the commandment of God shall obtain everlasting life ; and this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his only begotten Son. 1 John iii. 23."—*Barnes.* The meaning of this phrase is nearly identical with John iii. 15, 36 ; v. 24. The commandment is life ; obedience to it yieldeth present, immediate life, and peace, and joy. ¶ *So I speak.* This renewed declaration, that he had not gone beyond the word of God in anything, is a glorious conclusion of our Lord's public testimony ; for here, according to John's narrative, is the end of it. The discourse, contained in the succeeding chapters, was addressed to

## CHAPTER XIII.

**N**OW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, (the

the disciples alone. Would that every man, who professes to be a minister of Christ, might so guard his public testimony, that he could say, at its close, as our Master said, that he had delivered nothing as truth, except what God had commanded. How few, who have not attempted to complete the revelation of God, by devices of human wisdom! Better were it, to follow the example of our Lord.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1. *Feast of the passover.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 2. ¶ *His hour was come, &c.* The time of his departure. The ensuing discourse seems to have been addressed to the disciples, the evening before our Lord's arrest and crucifixion. It was on this occasion, that he instituted what is usually denominated the "Lord's Supper." Knowing that this was the last time that he should sup with them, before he should be nailed to the cross, and that, before another sun should set, his body would be consigned to the sepulchre, he requested his disciples to commemorate his dying love by this simple yet affecting rite. And while engaged at the table, he addressed them at unusual length, that he might prepare them to meet the approaching trial without utterly losing their confidence in him. Moreover, he desired to impress on their minds many useful lessons, which they would be more certain to remember, as his dying testimony. It is observable, that while John minutely relates this address, which is omitted by the other evangelists, he entirely omits the institution of the "Supper," which is noticed by all the others. ¶ *He loved them unto the end.* His love, like the Father's, is unchangeable.

2. *Supper being ended.* More literally, supper being; that is, during supper. That the supper had commenced,

devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,)

3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

when the events occurred which are here narrated, is evident from ver. 4; and that it had not ended is equally evident from ver. 26. ¶ *The devil.* A personification of the lusts and passions of Judas, which had already inclined him to perfidy, and which soon afterwards triumphed over that miserable man, ver. 27. The origin, progress, and result, of temptation, are graphically delineated by the apostle, Jas. i. 13—15. ¶ *Having now put into the heart, &c.* Judas had felt the power of this temptation, arising probably through his avarice, before this assembly at supper. It would seem that immediately after he was rebuked for an indecent display of his avaricious disposition, John xii. 7, 8, he went to the chief priests, and agreed, for thirty pieces of silver, to betray Jesus into their hands. Matt. xxvi. 10—16. His treacherous intention was known to Him who had power to read the heart. John ii. 25, and was here referred to, ver. 11, 18. ¶ *Betray him.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 16.

3. *Father had given, &c.* See notes on John iii. 35; xvii. 2, 9, 10. ¶ *Come from God.* See notes on iii. 13; xvii. 5. ¶ *Went to God.* Returned again to the bosom of the Father. John vi. 62; xiv. 23. Notwithstanding the dignity of his character and mission, and his perfect knowledge of his origin and the glorious exaltation which awaited him, our Lord did not disdain to perform what was regarded as a menial office, for the comfort of his disciples. The moral lesson which he thus designed to impress on their minds is announced in ver. 13—17.

4. *Riseth from supper.* Evidently after they had commenced eating, and before they had completed their meal. See note on ver. 2. ¶ *Laid aside his garments.* That is, his outer garment. See note on Matt. v. 40. ¶ *Took a towel, &c.* He assumed the common garb of

5 After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto

a servant, being about to perform an office usually assigned to servants, or slaves.

5. *Wash the disciples' feet, &c.* As the Jews travelled chiefly on foot, and ordinarily used sandals instead of shoes, their feet necessarily became soiled; hence it was the common custom, for servants to remove the sandals and wash the feet of their masters and the invited guests. See note on Matt. iii. 11. See also 1 Sam. xxv. 41. This might easily be done, while they were sitting or rather reclining at table. See note on Matt. viii. 11.

6. *Dost thou wash my feet?* Peter, with much energy, expresses his surprise, that one whom he revered as his superior should perform such a menial service for him and the other disciples.

7. *Thou knowest not now, &c.* That is, Peter knew not the meaning or design of Jesus. He knew the action, for he saw it, and protested against its performance; but he did not understand its moral import, until it was explained, ver. 13—17. Many events occur, in the administration of the divine government, which, to short-sighted mortals, appear as unsuitable and ill-timed, as this action of our Lord appeared to his impatient disciple. It would quiet our minds, and very much reconcile us to these *seeming* improprieties, if we could always cherish a firm faith, that we shall hereafter know their reasonableness and profitableness, though for the present they be hidden from our eyes.

8. *Thou shalt never wash my feet.* This protestation was perfectly characteristic. The impetuous disciple would not consent that his Master should so degrade himself; for he regarded it as a degradation. If the other disciples would sit quietly, and become willing parties to the disgrace, they might; but for himself, he would have no part or lot in the matter. The conduct of Jesus

him, What I do thou knowest now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also

he considered wrong and misjudged, and he was willing to have his opinion known and understood. But Peter, like many other sanguine persons, mistook the real seat of the difficulty; it was not in the action of Jesus, but in his own lack of understanding. In the first place, he was bound to believe that Jesus would not wash the feet of his disciples, except for a sufficient and justifiable reason. Moreover, he had been expressly assured that there was such a reason, which should afterwards be explained. The reproof he received for a similar impertinence and impropriety of conduct, on a former occasion, should have corrected his hasty spirit; Matt. xvi. 22, 23; but the habit of insubordination was not fully overcome, until he was painfully convinced of his own weakness and dependence, his ignorance and folly, and his liability to stumble and fall, when he was frightened into a denial of his Lord. Matt. xxvi. 69—75.

¶ *If I wash thee not, &c.* That is, if you have not so much confidence in me, as to submit to this washing, merely because you cannot perceive its benefit or propriety, you are not a true disciple, and are not prepared for the privileges and joys of my kingdom. Some suppose there is here an allusion also to that spiritual purification, which is often represented under the figure of washing. But this seems not to have been the original design of our Lord's action or language. He washed his disciples' feet, not so much to represent the purifying influences of his gospel, as to give them an example of humility and kindness. See ver. 13—17. It is more natural to understand him, therefore, to speak here of a literal rather than a figurative washing.

9. *Not my feet only, &c.* As a pendulum, removed from its place of rest, swings beyond the point of gravitation to the opposite extreme, so Peter, while he relinquished his opposition to an-



*my hands and my head.*

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his feet*, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him: therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

washing, suggested *more* than Jesus proposed to bestow. He changed his position; but he was quite as far from that submissive state which is becoming in a disciple, as he was before. A second admonition became necessary, to overcome his improper state of feeling. Thus fares it, generally, with those who attempt to rectify the mistakes, or to point out the defects, in the divine government. The part of a true disciple is, to cherish the belief that God will do right, in all things; and that whatever he has taught, or required, or promised, through his Son, is holy, just, true, and designed for the highest good of his children. Most commentators interpret this language of Peter as expressive of his entire and unreserved submission, a readiness to submit to any and all washing which Jesus might judge necessary. But the former interpretation seems more characteristic of this impetuous disciple, and more consistent with the general scope of the narrative.

10. *He that is washed needeth not, &c.* This language has been needlessly spiritualized by some interpreters. The design of our Lord was, to show Peter that the washing of his hands and head was unnecessary, for the accomplishment of the purpose intended. The lesson was sufficiently taught, by washing the feet. This fact he illustrated, by appealing to a familiar circumstance; showing that the washing of the feet was necessary, and a proper exhibition of humility and kindness, while that which Peter proposed was unnecessary, at best no more than a work of supererogation, and therefore a token of officiousness and ostentation, rather than of humility. "This illustration is borrowed from the custom of the times; according to which, those who had been invited to a feast bathed themselves before they went; but, as they commonly walked in sandals, (unless when on a journey,) and wore no stockings, it was usual to get their feet washed by the servants of the family, before they

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and

laid themselves on the couches. Their feet, which would be soiled by walking, required cleaning, though the rest of their body did not. The great utility and frequent need of washing the feet, in those countries, has occasioned its being so often mentioned in the New Testament as an evidence of humility, hospitality, and brotherly love."—*Campbell*. "¶ *Ye are clean, but not all.* Here is a covert allusion to the apostasy of Judas, ver. 11; intimating that, while outward cleanliness was completed by washing the feet, yet one of them, at least, remained impure in another respect.

11. *Should betray.* Would betray; or was about to betray. It was certain that Judas would betray him, and Jesus knew it. Yet he was led to the consummation of his perfidy, not by an irresistible decree of fate, but by the power of temptation. He was enticed and led captive by his sordid lusts. Jas. i. 14.

12. *Know ye what I have done to you?* Do you understand the import of what I have done, the moral lesson which I would impress on your minds? He knew they did not understand this, ver. 7: but by this question, he called their attention to the explanation which he was about to give. And it should not be overlooked, that, in this explanation, it is not suggested that any hidden meaning was conveyed, or truth taught, except the duty of humility and kindness. As our Lord has explained what he *did* mean, we have no right to say he meant anything else. His conduct may well *illustrate* other truths; but as *proof*, it should not be carried beyond his own limitation.

13. *Master, and Lord.* Teacher and Ruler. The original is more emphatic, as the article is used in both cases, denoting the names to be used as appellatives; The Master, The Ruler or Lord. ¶ *Ye say well, &c.* Ye speak truly. I am what you style me.

14, 15. *Ye also ought to wash, &c*

Master, have washed your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Some have understood this as a command that Christians should literally wash each other's feet. But there are many reasons for believing that, instead of this, they were rather required to cultivate the spirit indicated by that act.

(1.) It does not appear that the apostles understood him to require the literal service of washing each other's feet ; for there is no evidence that they either performed this service themselves, or enjoined it on others as a duty. (2.)

The special service here named is much less important than the great principle illustrated by it. And it was the manifest object of our Lord to enforce a principle, rather than the performance of a single service, however happily that service might illustrate the principle.

(3.) By comparing the narratives of Luke and John, we shall perceive additional evidence that the great design of our Lord was, to enforce the principle of humility, of which his disciples were sadly destitute. At that time of peril, when Jesus had foretold his approaching sufferings, they so confidently expected he would establish a temporal kingdom, and were so ambitious and greedy of its chief honors, that "there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." Luke xxii. 24. The notice by our Lord of this strife, if not the strife itself, is represented by Luke to have been while they were at the table, on the same occasion mentioned here by John. He says also that, in his exhortation to humility, our Lord addressed his disciples thus : "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? is not he that sitteth at meat ? but I am among you as he that serveth." Luke xxii. 27.

Can there be any considerable doubt that Luke refers to the very same address of Jesus, narrated here in ver. 13—17 ? It seems perfectly evident, that both evangelists refer to the same facts, though they differ in detail ; as indeed John differs from all the others, in giving a much more full account of our Lord's instructions to his disciples on that interesting occasion. If this be

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

so, then it is beyond dispute, that Jesus chiefly intended to enforce and illustrate the great principle of humility and kindness, and not merely to command the performance of a single duty. He gave them an example of such humility, and a desire to contribute to the welfare of others, by performing what was regarded as a menial service. If he, their acknowledged superior, would do this, so ought they to minister to each other's comfort, even in a humble capacity, instead of striving and disputing for the most dignified stations.

16. *The servant*, &c. See Matt. x. 24 ; Luke vi. 40. The idea is, it would not disgrace the disciples, nor be inconsistent with their proper honor or dignity, to imitate the example of their Lord, even in the performance of those duties which worldly pride might account degrading.

17. *If ye know these things ?* That is, if you understand them ; if you comprehend the lesson of humility and kindness thus taught by action. See ver. 7. ¶ *Happy are ye if ye do them.* It would have availed the disciples little, to witness the example of humility and kindness exhibited by their Master, if they had not cultivated the spirit which he thus illustrated. But the lesson was not lost upon them. From this time forth, we hear of no more strife among them for preëminence in power and dignity ; but they cheerfully performed any duty, however arduous, for the benefit of mankind, and even offered their own lives a willing sacrifice for the general good. Unlike some of their misnamed successors, instead of eagerly coveting stations of earthly pomp and glory, they became the true servants of their brethren, and thus entitled themselves to perpetual remembrance and honor. The knowledge of duty is not enough ; if we would receive substantial benefit, we must perform it. It is not enough, that we *understand* the things which our Lord has required ; we must *do them*, if we would be happy. And we should rejoice that no duty is required, which is inconsistent with our highest happi-

18 ¶ I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen ; but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

ness even on the earth. Of every requisition of the gospel, it may truly be said, "happy are ye if ye do them."

19. *I speak not of you all.* That is, in saying, you are clean. See ver. 10. Jesus here recurs to what he had formerly said of the inward impurity of his false disciple. ¶ *I know whom I have chosen.* Some suppose that Jesus intended to be understood that he had chosen only eleven, of whom Judas was not one. It seems more natural to understand the word *chosen* here in the same sense as in John vi. 70, where it is used with a similar reference. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" So here, he had chosen the twelve to be his companions and his apostles for a time ; yet he knew, from the commencement, that one of them was a devil, or a false accuser, and that he would betray him. Thus and thus only could the scripture be fulfilled, which he quoted. His betrayer was to be one of his familiar associates, who had eaten of his bread and shared his kindness. When he selected the members of his household, so to speak, he doubtless foresaw the treachery of Judas, and the impetuosity and rashness of Peter ; he knew that the one would deny and the other betray him. Yet he chose them both ; and the result was precisely what he anticipated and foretold, in regard to both ; and, so far as Judas was concerned, what the ancient prophet had foretold. ¶ *That the scripture.* See Ps. xli. 9. Supposed to have been written with immediate reference to Ahithophel, and others who were ungrateful to David. ¶ *May be fulfilled.* See notes on Matt. i. 22 ; ii. 15. "It is difficult to tell whether this prophecy had a primary reference to Judas, or whether it be meant that it received a more complete fulfilment in his case than in the time of David. The cases were similar ; the same words would describe both events, and there was an exhibition of similar ingratitude and

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I

baseness in both cases."—*Barnes.* ¶ *Eateth bread with me.* A familiar associate ; one who has been treated as a friend. ¶ *Lifted up his heel, &c.* Endeavored to injure me. Injuries received from false friends are more aggravating than those inflicted by open enemies. Yet it was wisely ordained by the Father, that his Son should be thus betrayed by one of his own chosen disciples. For when he betrayed him, he alleged no evil against him, and could not be tempted, even through his inordinate lust for gold, to accuse him of any crime whatever ; and, moreover, after he had thus sold his Lord for money, his conscience lashed him with such intolerable severity, that he was compelled to disgorge his ill-gotten booty, and openly to testify the innocence of his Master. Matt. xxvii. 4. Inasmuch as one who knew our Lord's whole manner of life, and who proved himself a mercenary traitor, could not be persuaded to say he was guilty of a single crime, the most satisfactory evidence was rendered to the world of his innocence and purity.

19. *I tell you before, &c.* Jesus knew his disciples would not only be shocked at the treachery of one of their own number, but be disheartened at his death, believing, as they did, that the true Messiah could not die. He put them on their guard, by announcing his death beforehand, and the manner of it, that his prophetic gift might have some influence on their minds. ¶ *I am he.* That is, the Messiah.

20. *He that receiveth, &c.* See note on Matt. x. 40, 41. The special design of these words, in this place, is not very obvious. Rosenmüller suggests, that Jesus intended thus to encourage his disciples to preach in his name, by intimating that their testimony would not be rejected by all ; but that some would hear and believe, receiving at once the Father as the Fountain of good, the Son as his accredited messen-

say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

ger, and them as preachers of truth. See also John xvii. 21.

21. *Troubled in spirit.* See notes on John xi. 33; xii. 27. He was deeply moved by the treachery of a disciple, and by the contemplation of the dreadful agony he was so soon to endure. Great was the fortitude of purpose, and sincere and devoted the spirit of obedience, which enabled our blessed Master to present himself an unresisting victim to the fate which he could never contemplate without a painful shudder. ¶ *Shall betray, &c.* What he had intimated in ver. 10, 18, he here declared plainly; that there was one traitor in the little band of disciples. Judas had not been suspected by others, ver. 22; but he was known by Jesus.

22—30. See Matt. xxvi. 22—25; Mark xiv. 19—21; Luke xxii. 23. The evangelists relate this exposure of Judas, with some variations, yet their accounts substantially agree. They all represent the Twelve as manifesting surprise and anxious doubt at their Master's annunciation. Luke says they "began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing;" which Matthew expresses by saying, "they began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" The question was not definitely answered at first. In the mean time, according to John's account, Peter desired another disciple, supposed to be this evangelist himself, to inquire who was the traitor. He did so; and was informed; but it does not appear that any other person present shared the information until subsequently. See ver. 28, 29. Judas having been directed to accomplish his work quickly, ver. 27, inquired, according to Matthew, whether Jesus intended him as the traitor, and received an affirmative answer. In this manner, the several accounts may be harmonized, without contradiction, although Matthew and John each mention some circumstances which are omitted by the other.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake

25 He then, lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I

22. *Doubting, &c.* They were utterly astonished. Each feared himself was intended. See note on Matt. xxvi. 22.

23. *Leaning on Jesus' bosom.* It will be recollected that the Jews were accustomed to recline on couches, at the table, resting on the elbow, the feet being extended back from the table. In this manner of reclining, the head of each would be near the bosom of the one next above him, and might naturally fall upon it, when addressing him. Our Lord was now at the table with his disciples; and it would seem his favorite disciple occupied the place next to him, in the position described. ¶ *Whom Jesus loved.* It has been the unanimous opinion of interpreters, in all ages, that this disciple was John himself. For this disciple, our Lord seems to have cherished a peculiar affection. He loved all his disciples and all men. But where peculiar loveliness existed, he manifested a peculiar tenderness of affection. See John xi. 3, 5. It is generally supposed that he thus loved John, because his gentleness and his affectionate disposition had a peculiar affinity with his own. It is certain, that, while Paul displays a more logical cast of mind, and Peter more energy of expression, John breathes forth a more fervent and all-pervading love, than any other disciple, in his gospel and epistles.

24. *Beckoned.* Made signs. See note on Luke i. 22. It is perfectly characteristic of Peter, that he should be thus impatient to know which of the number was capable of such a base act of treachery. He had sufficient confidence that he was not deservedly implicated, ver. 37; yet he may have feared he was suspected on account of what is related, ver. 6—9. See note on Matt. xxvi. 22.

25. *Lying on Jesus' breast.* The word here used in the original is not the same which occurs, ver. 23; it indicates not only inclining towards, but actually resting upon, another. As he

have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon.

27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table

turned his head, to whisper the interrogation, it would naturally fall on his Master's breast.

26. *Give a sop.* See note on Matt. xxvi. 23. The word *sop* means a portion of food dipped in the sauce with which the paschal feast was eaten. It was probably not unusual at that time, when the customs were so different from the present, for him who presided at the feast to distribute portions of food in this manner. Had it been unusual, it would have attracted the attention of the disciples. But it does not appear that any, except John, noticed the action or understood its import, ver. 23, 29.

27. *After the sop.* That is, after he had received and probably eaten it. ¶ *Satan entered into him.* His perfidious design was fully formed and established. He had been tempted previously, and indeed had contracted to deliver Jesus into the hands of the Jews. See ver. 2, and Matt. xxvi. 14—16. But he would seem to have had some hesitation, until now. Whether he understood the sign of Jesus, and suspected it was understood by the others, and was thus goaded on by mortification and chagrin, does not distinctly appear. But, for some reason, he resolved to do at once what he had for some time been contemplating. His evil passions triumphed and obtained full mastery of his mind; as if he were absolutely possessed by an evil spirit. See note on ver. 2. ¶ *That thou doest, do quickly.* Some understand these words to mean, decide at once what you will do; if you relent, abandon your design entirely; if you persist, execute it at once. This interpretation might be allowable, were it not for the fact, that Jesus knew the heart; he knew the design was fully formed; he knew it would be executed, and had foretold it: and it would seem idle, under such circumstances, to call on him to decide. A more natural interpretation is probably more correct. You have sold

knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

yourself to sin. Complete your work of iniquity at once. My hour is come. I am ready. Let there be no more delay. This however is not to be regarded as a command to do evil; but rather as an intimation that the evil was certain, and that Jesus was ready to encounter it. See note on Matt. xxiii. 32. "That thou doest, thou mayest do quickly, as soon as thou wilt, for I am ready to suffer."—*Whitby*. "If thou art determined to betray me, do it soon, that the dread of what I am to suffer may not be lengthened."—*Pearce*. "I will not force thee to turn from thy purpose, and without this thou wilt not. Thy designs are all known to me; what thou art determined to do, and I to permit, do directly; delay not, I am ready."—*Clarke*.

23, 29. *No man at the table knew, &c.* From this, it is evident that none except John then understood the sign by which Jesus had indicated who was the traitor, ver. 26. ¶ *The bag.* Namely, that which contained their common stock. See note on John xii. 6. ¶ *Against the feast.* The passover. Hence some have supposed that the supper here described was before the passover. But it should be remembered, that the feast continued during seven days, or, as some say, eight; and although the lamb and other necessities for the paschal supper, strictly speaking, had been provided, and eaten, yet other provisions were necessary for the succeeding days of the feast. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 2, 17—25. "Rather, for the feast; it lasted eight days, reckoning the seven days of unleavened bread and the day of the passover. Unleavened bread, or something else which in those days was necessary, might be what the disciples thought Jesus to have meant."—*Pearce*. ¶ *To the poor.* Although the resources of our Lord and his disciples were scanty and precarious, they shared them with the poor, thus exhibiting the true spirit of philanthropy and universal benevolence which breathes in the gos

30 He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

31 ¶ Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32 If God be glorified in him,

pel. It may be remarked, to prevent misapprehension, that, although Jesus possessed miraculous power, and exercised it for the benefit of others, feeding them when hungry, there is no evidence that he ever resorted to that means for the supply of his own wants; so that whatever he gave was taken from his own stock as effectually and absolutely as if he had been destitute of such power. See note on Matt. iv. 3, 4.

30. *It was night.* The supper was in the evening. And before the next morning Jesus was betrayed. John xviii. 1—12.

31. *Now is the Son of man glorified.* That is, all things are now ready for the consummation of the purpose for which I came into the world. I have fulfilled my ministry; I have borne testimony to the truth; I have revealed the character and purposes of God, and the duty and destiny of men; I am now ready to seal my testament with my own blood. The betrayer has gone forth, and will soon return with an armed band; I shall be seized and lifted up, John. xii. 32; and my Father will exalt me to glory. John xvii. 5; Phil. ii. 8—11. ¶ *God is glorified in him.* His glory is displayed in the perfect representation I have given of his character, and in the perfect example of purity and righteousness I have exhibited. His justice, truth, holiness, and unfailing love, have been declared to men; and I shall demonstrate the sincerity of my confidence in him by surrendering my spirit into his hands, without an effort to avoid death. God is glorified, and his name honored, by the righteousness and obedience of mere men: much more by that of his Son. See John xv. 8.

32. *Glorify him in himself, &c.* Our Lord had reference, probably, both to the miraculous manifestations of divine power which attended his death and resurrection, and thus demonstrated him to be the Son of God, worthy to be honored, and loved and confided in, by all

God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and, as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say to you.

men,—and also to that exaltation above all principalities and powers which awaited him after his ascension into glory. Eph. i. 20—23; Heb. i. 1—14.

33. *Little children.* The word *children* is often used as an expression of affection. But the diminutive phrase *little children* is still more expressive of tenderness and love, such as a fond mother cherishes for her offspring. It is often used by John in his epistles. Jesus was about to be taken from this little flock, who would be left as lambs in the midst of wolves. With the utmost tenderness he endeavored to comfort them by assurances that he would not utterly forsake them; but, though absent bodily, he would be with them and in them by the influences of his spirit, while they lived, and would receive them to himself, when they had accomplished their allotted labor. This consoling address extends through the three succeeding chapters. He then commended them to God in prayer, and went forth to meet his fate. ¶ *Little while.* A short time only; in fact, the period here denoted was less than twenty-four hours. ¶ *I am with you.* Referring, of course, to his bodily presence. For he promised to be with them perpetually in spirit. ¶ *As I said unto the Jews.* See John vii. 34; viii. 21. ¶ *So now I say to you.* They could not follow him then, where he was going, ver. 36. He was about to pass from the scenes of mortal life, and to be no more seen bodily on the earth. And as the Jews could not approach him either to injure, or to ask his assistance to deliver them from bondage, so neither could his disciples go to him for personal counsel, or protection against their persecutors. They must be separated from him, for a time; for a direct communication may not be expected between mortality and immortality. Ye, they were assured that they should afterwards be received to himself and be no more absent. See 2 Cor. v. 6—8; Phil. i. 21—23.

31 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have

34. *New commandment.* This commandment is not called new, because it was then given for the first time ; for Jesus had repeatedly enjoined the same duty, and declared, moreover, that it was the second great commandment in the law ; not intending that it was expressed in so many words, but that it was the principle lying at the foundation of all the commandments of the second table, respecting the duties of man to man. We may suppose it was called *new*, because it had long been practically obsolete among the Jews, and was never fully understood among the Gentiles. The law, to be sure, was founded in part on the great principle of mutual love between men. But the Jews, in their punctilious nicety of obedience to the outward precepts, entirely overlooked the inward and living principle. While careful to avoid the overt act of murder, they did not hesitate to cherish the most violent and bitter hatred ; not considering that they thus violated the spirit of the precept, inasmuch as "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." 1 John iii. 15. See also Matt. v. 43—48. But this commandment might be called *new*, because it never before had such a prominent place assigned to it in any system of religion, not even excepting the Jewish, in its palmyest days. Moses urged the duty ; but still so wide a distinction was allowed between the children of Israel and the Gentiles, that it was soon and not very unnaturally believed that Gentiles might be regarded unworthy of love. Jesus made no such distinction. He required his followers to love the whole race of man, as the children of one Father. He did not permit them to hate any being or anything in the vast universe, except sin. Such wide-spreading and all-embracing love was previously unheard of ; and its requisition by our Lord was truly a *new* commandment ; not new, at this particular time, in respect to his former instructions, for he had frequently urged it and uniformly illustrated it ; but new in respect to all previous teachers and systems.

love one to another.

36 ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou ? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now ; but thou shalt follow me afterward.

¶ *That ye love one another.* This was the new commandment, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the gospel of Christ. For its extent, see notes on Matt. v. 43—48. ¶ *As I have loved, &c.* He had given them a perfect example of that love, lacking only a single feature, which was then about to be added in the sacrifice of his own life on their behalf. John xv. 13 ; Rom. v. 6—8. And he exhorted and commanded his disciples to cultivate and cherish a similar spirit, and to be guided by that spirit in their labors for the advancement of human happiness.

35. *By this shall all men know, &c.* Their mutual love and universal benevolence should be their badge of discipleship. Other insignia of Christianity have been assumed by many degenerate sons of the church ; but this and this only is an infallible test of true discipleship. He who loves not God and man is not a disciple of the blessed Jesus, whatever his pretensions may be. But if he obey this commandment, he gives abundant evidence that he is a true disciple. Peculiar love and friendship may be indulged and cherished, yet the principle is broad as the universe, and none are to be excluded from its operation. He is but an imperfect disciple, who loves none but those whom he regards as Christians. Jesus requires us to love all men. See note on Matt. v. 43—48. See also Rom. xiii. 8—10 ; Gal. vi. 10.

36. *Whither goest thou ?* Peter was as blind as the Jews, John vii. 35 ; viii. 22. He did not yet believe that Jesus would die, and supposed he was about to conceal himself in secrecy ; or perhaps, that he was about to seize that temporal power which belonged to him, and doubted the courage of his disciples to follow him. See note on Luke xxii. 33. ¶ *Shall follow me afterward.* This assurance demonstrates the fact, that by saying "whither I go, ye cannot come," ver. 33, Jesus did not intimate an endless exclusion from his presence. And if he did not mean this, when he addressed his disciples,

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

neither was such his meaning when he addressed the same language to the Jews, John vii. 34; viii. 21; for he here expressly refers to what he then said to them, ver. 33. None, either disciples or enemies, could follow him then. But it is by no means to be concluded, that they should never follow him.

37, 38. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 33—35; Mark xiv. 29—31; Luke xxii. 31—34.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

1. *Let not your heart be troubled.* That is, by the prospect of my departure, or by the event when it shall occur. The disciples were very sad at the intimation given them, that they were to be separated from their Master, even for a temporary period. John xiii. 33, 36; xvi. 6. And Jesus clearly foresaw that they would be disconsolate, when he should actually be crucified. For as yet, they did not believe he would die. They still believed a temporal government would be assumed by the Messiah. And when he died, without even attempting to exercise such authority, their faith in him as the Messiah was almost annihilated. See note at the end of Matt. xxviii. To revive their drooping spirits, and to inspire them with some degree of fortitude, Jesus addressed to them the discourse recorded in this and the following chapters. He assured them that his departure was for their own advantage; that they should not be left comfortless; that, though absent in body, he would commune with their spirits; that they were safe in the protecting care of their heavenly Father; and that they should be received into mansions of rest, when they should have accomplished their earthly pilgrimage. By these and other assurances, he affectionately administered consolation to their sorrowful hearts. ¶ *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* You have confidence in God; exercise

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**L**ET not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

the same confidence in me; for I am his chosen messenger, and I will fully perform his pleasure. Be not troubled at my temporary absence; but believe that I shall continue to feel an interest in your welfare and to render you aid by my spirit. By many critics, the whole phrase is read imperatively thus: "Believe on God, and believe on me."—"By rendering both in the imperative, the sense is not only good, but apposite. How frequently, in the book of Psalms, are the people of God, in the time of affliction, exhorted to trust in the Lord? Such exhortations, therefore, are not understood to imply a total want of faith in those to whom they are given."—*Campbell*. The sense then may be this: Let not the events which are about to occur overwhelm you with trouble, however unexpected and afflictive they may be; let them not disturb your faith in God or in me. Rather confide in his wisdom and faithfulness, and in mine; and steadfastly believe, that, while the events appear to you so disastrous, they will be overruled for your good, for your highest welfare.

2, 3. *In my Father's house, &c.* Commentators have generally supposed our Lord here referred to *heaven*, or the abode of the children of God after their resurrection to immortality. And such appears to me the most obvious and correct interpretation. Different opinions have recently been expressed, which deserve notice, and seem to require that a reason be given for adhering to the more ancient and general exposition.

"It is commonly understood as affirming that in heaven there is *ample room* to receive all who will come; that therefore the disciples might be sure that they would not be excluded. Some have understood it as affirming that there will be different *grades* in the joys of heaven; that some of the mansions of the saints will be nearer to



### 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again

God than others, agreeably to 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41. But perhaps this passage may have a meaning which has not occurred to interpreters. Jesus was consoling his disciples, who were affected with grief at the idea of his separation. To comfort them, he addresses them in this language: The universe is the dwelling-place of my Father. All is his *house*. Whether on earth or in heaven, we are still in his habitation. In that vast abode of God, there are many mansions. The earth is one of them. Heaven is another. Whether here, or there, we are still in the house, in one of the mansions of our Father, in one of the *apartments* of his vast abode. This we ought continually to feel, and to rejoice that we are permitted to occupy *any part* of his dwelling-place. Nor does it differ much whether we are in *this* mansion or another. It should not be a matter of grief when we are called to pass from one part of this vast habitation of God to another. I am indeed about to leave you, but I am going only to another part of the vast dwelling-place of God. I shall still be in the same universal habitation with you; still in the house of the same God; and am going for an important purpose, to fit up another abode for your eternal dwelling."—*Barnes*.

Another theory is substantially as follows: By his Father's *house*, it is said that Jesus intended the church on earth; and by its many mansions, the various offices and stations in it, allotted to believers. "In the church of Christ here in this world, in the kingdom of Christ here on earth, in this house of God, are many mansions, allotments, or official appointments. It is evident that Jesus delivered the discourse, in which he spoke to his disciples of the many mansions which are in his Father's house, but a short time after he saw the workings of envy and strife among them, on the occasion of the request of James and John to sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Jesus, in his kingdom. And though he did not assume the right to make the appointments desired, he indicated, by his reply, that such appointments would be made by his Father. It seems not improbable, therefore, that when he spoke of the many mansions in his Father's house, he de-

signed to quiet the minds of his disciples, by giving them to understand that there were suitable allotments for them all; and that they had no occasion to be troubled in relation to their future stations, or employments, as his servants, and as servants of his church." In proof that the *Father's house* means the church on earth, reference is made to Luke xxiv. 26; Eph. ii. 19—22; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 6; x. 19—22; 1 Pet. iv. 17; and, that the *mansions* in it denote the various official allotments in the church, to Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 24—30; Rom. xii. 3—8; 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28; Eph. iv. 7, 8, 11, 12; Rev. iv. 9, 10; Dan. vii. 27. It is said, moreover, that the disciples were received into these mansions "at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter, was so abundantly given. Then did the disciples of Jesus enter with him into the place he had prepared for them. Then did he come and receive them unto himself; and where he was there were they." In support of this idea, reliance is had upon ver. 15—18, 23; xvii. 15, 24. For a full statement and illustration of this theory, see article by Rev. H. Ballou, in the Univ. Quarterly, I., 128—136.

Without question, there is much ingenuity in both the foregoing theories. Nevertheless, as an interpretation of our Lord's language in this place, neither of them appears to me preferable to the more common and ancient exposition; nor does either appear fully consistent with the general spirit of the discourse, and with the language of the apostles on the same subject. (1.) I do not recollect that our Lord uses the phrase "my Father's house," elsewhere, except in John ii. 16, where it denotes the temple at Jerusalem. The equivalent phrase, "the house of God," or, "house of the Lord," is undoubtedly sometimes used to denote the church on earth; though, much more frequently, it denotes the temple. But in all cases, the fundamental idea is, *a place where the divine presence is peculiarly manifested and felt*. Thus when Jacob slept in the wilderness, with a stone for his pillow, he enjoyed an impressive vision of God's glory. And when he awoke, "he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! this is

and receive you unto myself; that

none other but the *house of God*, and this is the gate of heaven." Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. Here was no visible house; Jacob slept in the open air. Here was no congregation of believers; Jacob was the only mortal present. Yet he called it the house of God; because the divine presence had been peculiarly manifested. The same appellation was given to the temple at Jerusalem, for a similar reason. See note on Matt. xxiii. 20—22. And for the same reason was the church called the house of God, because his spirit was enjoyed by its faithful members, and was manifested to the world in them. The same fundamental idea is obviously perceptible in all these applications of the phrase. And such application is not improper, notwithstanding the fact, that God is everywhere present, and not confined to any limited dwelling-place. His *house*, in the largest sense, is the universe, and he filleth all which it contains. Yet our Lord frequently refers to him as being *peculiarly* present, elsewhere than on the earth. As often as he speaks of *coming from God*, and *returning to God*, he recognizes this idea. I understand him, by his *Father's house*, to refer to a place distinguished by the peculiar manifestation of God's presence. And it seems perfectly obvious that that place was not this earth. The idea distinctly runs through this whole discourse, that, to reach the place thus indicated, he must depart from his disciples. God was with him and with his disciples, on the earth, it is true; yet it is equally true, that, to go to the Father, it was necessary that Jesus should leave the earth and go elsewhere. See John xiii. 1, 3, 33, 36; xiv. 25, 23; xv. 26; xvi. 4, 7, 10, 28; xvii. 11. If, by his *Father's house*, he here intended the *universe*, or the *church*, he need not have departed from the earth, or from his disciples, in order to *go to the Father*; for, in this sense, the Father was here. That he did thus depart for this avowed reason, sufficiently indicates that he referred to another place and another modification of the divine presence. When he says, in ver. 2, *I go to prepare a place*, I understand him to refer to the same departure mentioned, John xiii. 33, 36, and again in John xvi. 28; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the

where I am, *there ye may be also*.

world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." (2.) One main design of this whole discourse is to console the disciples, who were troubled at the announcement of their Lord's departure; See John xiii. 33; xiv. 1; xvi. 5—7. He instructed them also concerning their duty, while he should be *absent*, (in whatever sense his absence is to be understood,) until he should *come again and receive them unto himself*. Among the trials, for which they were to be prepared, was this: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John xvi. 2. By comparing ver. 1—6, of the chapter here referred to, it will be seen that this persecution would befall them *while he was absent*. But they endured nothing of this kind before the day of Pentecost; and if they were *then* received to himself, it is not easily seen how this passage can be satisfactorily explained. In my judgment, he designed to assure them, that, although they must endure such trials *before* he should return and receive them to himself, yet in the mean time they should not be left without support; for they should be sustained by the Comforter, and his own spirit should be with them and in them, to encourage and comfort their hearts. But I do not regard this dwelling with them by his spirit, as identical with his receiving them to himself. (3.) Many years after Jesus *went to the Father*, his disciples are represented as *absent* from him, and as not being able to become present, except by first putting off this mortal body. 2 Cor. v. 1—8; Phil. i. 21—24; compare 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. Hence they seem not to have considered themselves as already received to him, and as dwelling with him, in the sense indicated in the text. Notwithstanding they enjoyed the influence of his spirit, of the blessed Comforter, according to the promise, they evidently regarded themselves as *absent*, and looked forward with hope to the period, when he should receive them to himself, and they should thenceforth be *present* with him. (4.) Jesus promises, ver. 23, and elsewhere, that both he and his Father will come and make their abode with true disciples; but this seems different from coming and receiving them. ☛

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

himself; in the one case, he comes and dwells with them; in the other, he takes them to dwell with him. God dwelt with him, while he was on the earth; he now dwells with the Father; but, in order to dwell with the Father, he left this world. John xvi. 28. In like manner, he dwells with his true disciples, while they are on earth; but hereafter he will take them to dwell with him; and, when he thus receives them to himself, it seems evident that they also will leave this world and go whither he has already gone. To this reception to the divine presence, at the close of their earthly pilgrimage, I understand the apostle to refer, 1 Cor. xv. 52—54; 1 Thess. iv. 15—17. See also Heb. xi. 10, 16, where a somewhat similar reference is made to a departure from this to a better world. (5.) As to the fancy, that by *many mansions* are indicated different degrees of dignity *here or elsewhere*, I see not the slightest ground for it in the text, nor any reason why the interpretation should be affected by it, in any manner whatever. The meaning of the passage seems to be this: while the disciples dwelt on earth, they should enjoy the consoling and sustaining influence of the divine spirit. In due time, their Master would return; and then he would receive them to himself, to God, to heaven. Henceforth they should dwell with him in his Father's house. And in that house there is abundant room for all. The riches of God's grace are inexhaustible. None need to fear that there will not be sufficient room or provision for them in heaven. The Father's house is amply capacious to contain all his children; and he hath the bread of life, enough to supply all their wants, and to spare.

2. *Father's house.* That is, in heaven; or where the divine presence is peculiarly manifested. ¶ *Many mansions.* Room enough for all. ¶ *I would have told you.* Had there been any doubt concerning the Father's ability or willingness to provide for all his children, Jesus would have mentioned it. But, knowing that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," Eph. iii. 20, he did not hesitate to declare that he would draw all men to himself, raise them up at the last day, and cause them to dwell for-

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest;

ever in his presence and in presence of the Father. John vi. 37—39; xii. 32; xvii. 24. ¶ *To prepare a place for you.* "A figure taken from one of a company of travellers going before the others, to make arrangements for their accommodation. The disciples would be admitted into the society of Jesus hereafter."—*Livermore.* "The meaning is, your future blessedness will be as great, and is as certain, as if it were prepared for you by me, your Master and Friend, and you were assured that I should return in person to conduct you to it."—*Norton.* A similar figure is used by the apostle, Heb. vi. 20.

3. *I will come again, &c.* Jesus is represented as coming to receive the spirits of his disciples, as they depart this life and are raised to immortality. Acts vii. 59; 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. ¶ *Where I am, &c.* "So shall we ever be with the Lord," says the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 17. There shall be no more separation. We shall then and forever behold the glory of our blessed Redeemer, and enjoy his presence and the sensible presence of the God and Father of our spirits. John xvii. 24; Eph. i. 10; 1 John iii. 2.

4. *Whither I go, ye know.* He had so frequently told them that he should die and be raised from the dead, thus returning to his Father, that he might well say they knew the fact. Yet were they so blinded by their expectation of an earthly kingdom, that they understood none of these things. Luke xviii. 34. ¶ *The way ye know.* I have heretofore told you I must die, and as I now announce my departure, that I may return to the Father, you know that my way of approach is through death.

5. *We know not whither, &c.* This objection was urged by Thomas, who would not believe that Jesus would die, until he was crucified, nor that he would be raised or was raised, until he had tangible evidence. John xx. 25—28. The other disciples were equally unbelieving at this time; nor were they fully enlightened concerning the propriety of the Messiah's death, or the true character of his kingdom, until after his resurrection. Luke xxiv. 21—27; Acts i. 6. Under these circumstances, they were unable to understand what he meant by going from them to the Father,

and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye

or indeed going to any place, where they were not able to follow him at once, John xiii. 36. ¶ *How can we know the way?* This difficulty was necessarily connected with the other. Ignorant of his destination, they were of course unable to comprehend what he intended by the way to attain it, or by which they should follow him.

6. *I am the way, and the truth, and the life.* Some understand this as a Hebraism, meaning *the true and the living way*. Or we may understand that Jesus was the way, because he would raise men up at the last day, and because, both by example and precept, he pointed out the way of holiness which alone prepares us for spiritual communion with God here or hereafter: he was the *truth*, because he bore an open and undisguised testimony to the truth, John xviii. 37; he was the *life*, because he communicated that which giveth life, and because he is commissioned to raise mankind from death to immortality. See notes on John iii. 15; vi. 39; xi. 25. ¶ *No man cometh, &c.* Jesus alone taught the true way of holiness, and made known the purpose of God to turn his children from ungodliness to holiness. No man can attain that intimate spiritual communion with God, which is the portion of true disciples here, much less that state of perfect and sensible communion which is reserved in heaven, except through the influence of those pure principles of holiness which were first distinctly developed to the world in the doctrine and the life of Jesus. Although men are to some extent active in profiting by the influences of this spirit, yet it should not be forgotten that both the means and the ability to profit are given us by God our Father, who sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world by purifying men from sinfulness. Tit. iii. 4—7; 1 John iv. 14.

7. *If ye had known me, &c.* If ye had understood my true character, and realized the extent in which the divine spirit dwelleth in me, ver. 9. It is supposed that Jesus here refers specially

should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

to the Father's design concerning his death and resurrection. He had frequently foretold these events; but his disciples did not comprehend his meaning, and when one of them caught a glimpse of his meaning, he remonstrated with such earnestness and violence, that he was rebuked as an opposer of the divine will, Matt. xvi. 21—23. But had they understood the true character of their Master, they would also have realized the propriety of the divine plan concerning him, and would have been satisfied that he spake in all things according to the will of God.

8. *Show us the Father.* That is, visibly. This was much like the request of the Jews that they might see a sign from heaven. Matt. xii. 38; xvi. 1. Such signs the ancient prophets had been accustomed to exhibit. Exo. iv. 1—9; 1 Kings xviii. 36—39. One would suppose that the miracles already wrought by our Lord might have convinced his disciples that God was with him, and that divine power was exhibited in his works. But their Jewish prejudices were very strong, and were overcome with the utmost difficulty.

9. *So long time, &c.* It is generally supposed that our Lord's public ministry on earth continued about three years, or, as some say, three years and a half. Philip was one of the earliest disciples, John i. 43, and had thus for a long season heard the instructions and witnessed the works of the Master; and surprise is expressed, that he did not yet comprehend his true character. We are not here to understand that Philip did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah; for all the apostles had solemnly professed their belief; and there is no good reason to doubt their sincerity. But they so widely mistook his character and the nature of his mission and kingdom, that they were troubled and grieved whenever he alluded to his death and departure from them, which was utterly inconsistent with their expectations concerning the Messiah. And they had not sufficiently realized that he was the express image of the divinity, and that

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I *am* in the

Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

his works were performed by the divine energy dwelling in him. ¶ *Hath seen the Father*. Not visibly and personally, in his very essence or substance. But they had seen a visible manifestation of his glorious attributes, power, wisdom, love, kindness, and holiness. Having seen this, and having heard the divine will distinctly announced, it might with propriety be said they had seen the Father, and known his will. So close was the moral resemblance between the Father and Son, that Jesus said they were one, John x. 30, though he acknowledged the Father's superiority, ver. 23. To see the one was therefore substantially to see the other. ¶ *How sayest thou*, &c. As much as to say, Your request is utterly unreasonable. You have already had so much evidence, that more would be superfluous.

10. *I am in the Father*, &c. See note on John x. 33. ¶ *I speak not of myself*. See notes on John vii. 16; viii. 23; xii. 49. ¶ *He doeth the works*. That is, the miracles, by which the mission of Jesus was attested and confirmed. See notes on John iii. 2; v. 19; x. 25.

11. *Believe me*. Believe my testimony, that such a union exists between my Father and myself. He had a right to demand implicit belief on the part of his disciples, not only because he knew that his testimony was true, but because he had given them abundant evidence of his veracity. He had no guile in his mouth, 1 Pet. ii. 22; but he spake always the truth in sincerity. ¶ *Or else*, &c. That is, if you will not believe my testimony, then regard the higher testimony of the divine power itself. ¶ *Very works' sake*. It is observable, that Jesus so often appealed to his miracles as the highest evidence

that God was with him. They who rejected this evidence were pronounced inexcusable. John xv. 24.

12—14. *He that believeth*, &c. There is doubtless a special reference here to the apostles and early disciples. The gift of miracles has ceased. But in the early age of the church, the apostles and other chosen servants of God "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." See notes on Mark xvi. 17—20. ¶ *The works*, &c. Miracles, similar to those which Jesus wrought. This promise was fulfilled. See Acts iii. 1—8; ix. 36—41; xiv. 8—10; xix. 11, 12; xx. 9, 10. ¶ *Greater works*. Not works requiring a more magnificent display of power than those which Jesus performed. To raise the dead, as much power was necessary, as to perform any miracle wrought by the apostles; in this sense, the apostles did not perform greater works than their Master. By the *greater works*, some understand speaking with tongues, Acts ii. 4; some, the power of healing, even by their shadow or by garments which had touched them, Acts v. 15; xix. 12. But a more probable interpretation is this: ye shall perform more effectual miracles; or, in other words, your preaching and miracles shall produce a more visible and widely-extended effect upon the people, than mine. Very few had been fully converted by the teaching of Jesus. All who could be gathered after his ascension was "about a hundred and twenty," Acts i. 15. Yet on the day of Pentecost, fifty days only after the crucifixion, the apostles having received the gift of tongues and of the Holy Ghost, Peter addressed the people, and

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

15 ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments :

"about three thousand souls" were converted to the truth, Acts ii. 41 ; and shortly afterwards, in consequence of a miracle of healing, and of another address by Peter, "about five thousand" men believed, Acts ch. iii., iv. 4. And before the apostles closed their ministry, the gospel had been preached and believed in almost every nation of the world. ¶ *Because I go unto my Father.* Campbell renders the passage thus: "Nay, even greater than these he shall do, because I go to my Father, and will do whatsoever ye shall ask in my name." He adds, that the common "rendering is deficient both in perspicuity and in connexion. Yet, except in the pointing, I have made no change on the words of the evangelist. Our Lord's going to his Father, considered by itself, does not account for their doing greater works than he had done, but when that is considered, along with what immediately follows, that he will do for them whatever they shall ask, it accounts for it entirely. When the twelfth verse is made, as in the English translation, a separate sentence, there is little connexion, as well as light, in the whole passage. The propriety of reading the words in the manner I have done, has been justly observed by Grotius and others." Yet if the division of sentences be retained, it may be observed, that there is a sense, and an important one, in which the departure of Jesus to the Father was conducive to this accession of apostolic power. They proclaimed his resurrection from the dead, as proof of his divine mission and of the truth of his gospel. Their testimony on this point was incontrovertible and irresistible. Their success, therefore, was far greater than it otherwise could have been, except by a direct miracle wrought upon the minds of men. ¶ *Whatsoever ye shall ask, &c.* See notes on Matt. xviii. 19, 20. ¶ *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.* That he may be honored in the person of his representative. The apostles uniformly ascribed their miraculous power to God, communicated through his Son. Acts ii. 22—36 ; iii. 12—16 ; iv. 10.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ;

15. *If ye love me, keep, &c.* The only proper evidence of love to Christ, is a careful obedience to his will, as made known in his commandments. It is of little service, to be excited even to tears of joy or sorrow, if the excitement produce no permanent effect on the heart. It is useless to refer to former transports of feeling, in proof that we are friends of Christ. We may have wept over the affecting narrative of his sufferings and death ; we may have been excited to the highest pitch of enthusiasm at the contemplation of his wisdom and power, and his gracious mission on behalf of mankind ; nevertheless, if we live in habitual disobedience to his commandments, if we forget God and injure men, we have not the slightest reason to account ourselves his friends, and all our professions of love are hollow and unfounded.

16. *I will pray the Father.* Here, as in numberless passages, Jesus acknowledges the superiority of his Father, and represents him as the original source of all blessings. ¶ *Another Comforter.* Commentators differ in interpreting the word *paraklētos*, (παράκλητος,) here rendered comforter. Some understand it to indicate the "Third Person in the Trinity ;" for such they suppose to be the character of the "Holy Ghost," ver. 26. The following interpretation is more correct. "The original word, *Paraclete*, signifies *advocate*, *teacher*, *monitor*, *comforter* ; and it is difficult to decide with precision what is the best term to be used. One epithet of the Messiah, among the Jews, was *Menahem*, in reference to his being a consoler, a comforter. Luke ii. 25. The term *advocate*, or intercessor, is applied to Jesus in 1 John ii. 1. The same terms are equally applicable to that which would come after Christ on the day of Pentecost, as he speaks of it as *another* comforter or advocate, that is, another in relation to himself. The divine influence which would soon descend on the apostles, after the ascension of their Master, is here personified under the name of *Paraclete*, as we personify Nature and Providence in common conversation, and as Wisdom. as

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Sin and Death, are personified in the scriptures. See Prov. viii.; Rom. vi. 9; vii. 11. The effect of this divine and special influence was not solely or chiefly to be of a consolatory character, though that was included, but to consist of instruction, guidance, and strength, in their future arduous duties and trials, as preachers of the gospel. Examine ver. 17, 26; Acts ii. 4."—*Livermore*. ¶ *Abide with you forever*. As long as you live; or perhaps with special reference to that age, during which they needed supernatural aid in the performance of the great work committed to them. See note on Matt. xxviii. 20. It is manifest, that the promise had special reference to the apostles and early Christians; for though the divine spirit dwells with all the children of God, this particular manifestation of that spirit is not now visible. See ver. 26; xvi. 13. After the revelation of God in the gospel was completed, men were no longer guided infallibly into the truth, but were left to the exercise of their own reason in ascertaining it from the inspired record. Hence it is, that disciples now, with equal honesty of purpose and purity of heart, entertain different views of divine truth. They have no infallible guide but the scriptures; and in seeking its meaning, by the aid of reason, they arrive at different results.

17. *Spirit of truth*. The same which is called the Comforter in ver. 16, and Holy Ghost in ver. 26. By this spirit, the minds of the disciples were enlightened, after the resurrection of Jesus, and more especially on the day of Pentecost. Thenceforth, they fully understood that the events, which at first they so deeply deplored, were wisely and mercifully ordered. Under the guidance and influence of this spirit, they went forth into the world, and boldly and successfully proclaimed the grace of God, displayed in the mission of his Son for the salvation of mankind. ¶ *The world*. This phrase sometimes denotes the unbelieving portion of men, in contradistinction to Christians; and such seems

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

to be its meaning here. ¶ *Cannot receive*. Cannot fully comprehend its influences. ¶ *Seeth him not, &c.* Doth not recognize it. The Jews did not recognize the divine power exhibited in the miracles of our Lord, though they saw the works. So neither did they recognize the spirit of truth by which he spake, though they heard his words. ¶ *Ye know him*. Ye recognize the spirit of truth in my language, and its influence is felt in your hearts. ¶ *Dwelleth with you*. They already possessed something of this spirit; but its influence was then slight, compared with what they experienced after the day of Pentecost. We must remember, that the reference here is exclusively to the operation of the spirit, as a guide to the truth.

18. *I will not leave you comfortless*. Literally *orphans*. They were troubled at his departure, regarded themselves as orphans, destitute of a guide and protector. He assured them that they should not be left unprotected. Not only should they be guided by the spirit of truth, by which his own communications to them had been directed, but his own spirit should be with them. ¶ *I will come to you*. He did literally come to them, after his resurrection. But his abode with them *then* was so short, that we cannot well understand him to refer to it here. He seems rather to refer to his spiritual communion, in which sense he was with them after his departure, as God was with him while he continued on earth. See note on Matt. xxviii. 20.

19. *Little while*. In less than twenty-four hours after this address, Jesus was crucified. ¶ *World seeth me no more*. Unbelievers could not see him *visibly*; nor were they capable, while they continued in unbelief, of recognizing his spiritual presence. ¶ *But ye see me, &c.* That is, spiritually. He had told them that by witnessing the manifestation of the divine spirit in himself, they had seen the Father, ver. 7—11. In like manner should they see him, though to mortal eyes invisible, by his power

20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, (not

and grace dwelling in them, cheering and encouraging their hearts, and enabling them to perform miracles and to speak "in demonstration of the spirit and of power." 1 Cor. ii. 4. ¶ *Because I live, &c.* This may be understood of that spiritual life which results from faith in Jesus as the Son of God, John iii. 15; v. 24; in which case the meaning is, that because he entered into the enjoyment of felicity with his Father, they should experience "all joy and peace in believing." Rom. xv. 13. Or, he may be understood to refer to the enjoyment of endless life and blessedness after death, and to assure them that they might regard his resurrection as a pledge of their own; in which case the meaning is similar to that of the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

20. *At that day.* At that time; referring to the time when the Comforter, or the spirit of truth, should be received by them. ¶ *Ye shall know, &c.* The unity of the Father and Son is here illustrated incidentally by the unity of the disciples with their Master. The Father dwelt in the Son by the influence of his spirit; and the Son, in his disciples, in like manner. Of this fact, the communion or in-dwelling of the spirit, the disciples should have no doubt. They should know it. Accordingly we find them asserting the fact with all boldness and confidence, appealing, in evidence of the fact, to the miracles which they performed in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Father. From that time forth, there was no indecision or wavering in them. They as firmly believed the spirit of their Master was with them, and that God had manifested himself in him, as they believed their own existence. They had full assurance of faith.

21. *He it is that loveth me.* See note on ver. 15. ¶ *Shall be loved, &c.* God is the Saviour of all men; but especially

Iscariot) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not, keep-

of believers; that is, he gives them a present enjoyment of salvation. 1 Tim. iv. 10. In like manner, he loveth all men, even sinners, Matt. v. 43-48; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 16; but the obedient experience a more sensible enjoyment of his love than others; and while they have consciences void of offence, they are conscious of his approval, and have "confidence towards God." 1 John iii. 21. ¶ *Manifest myself, &c.* Make you sensible of my presence. See ver. 23.

22. *Judas.* The same as Lebbeus, or Thaddeus. See note on Matt. x. 3. He was brother of James the Less, and author of the Epistle of Jude. Luke vi. 16. ¶ *How is it, &c.* Judas evidently contemplated a bodily manifestation, and could not understand how it should be given exclusively to the disciples.

23. *If a man love, &c.* See note on ver. 15. Obedience, which is there proposed as a *test* of love, is here announced as its certain *fruit* or *result*. ¶ *Father will love him.* See note on ver. 21. ¶ *Make our abode with him.* "He who acts out the commandments of Jesus from the heart, elevates and purifies his moral sense. He discerns the moral significance of things. He sees the Father and the Son; they come to him not personally, in visible shapes, but they are manifested in the brightness of their moral being, present to his heart. They not only come to him, but they are in him and he is in them. A far more intimate acquaintance, a far closer and more inspiring union, takes place, than could be formed by mere personal intercourse."—*Furness*. Such is the spiritual communion which believing and obedient disciples shall enjoy, while on earth. But this coming and dwelling with them here, seems to be different from the coming and receiving them to himself, which our Lord mentions in ver. 3.



eth not my sayings : and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall

24. *Loveth me not, keepeth not, &c.* This is the counterpart to ver. 15, 23. As obedience is the fruit of love, so is disobedience the result of a lack of love. Whosoever lives in habitual disobedience to the precepts of Jesus has no reason to believe he loves him, whatever transports he may have experienced. "By their *fruits* ye shall know them," said our Lord. Matt. vii. 20. This is the only safe standard. ¶ *Is not mine, &c.* See note on John vii. 16.

25. *Being yet present with you.* Hence it appears, that while Jesus promised his disciples that he would make his abode with them spiritually, after his decease, he still kept before their minds the fact, that, in an important sense, he should depart from them by returning to the Father ; he would then no longer be *present* with them. Hence it follows, that, by receiving them to himself, in his Father's presence, he intended something different from dwelling with them in this world, ver. 3. While he was present with them, he gave them these instructions and assurances, that their grief at his departure might be moderated, and that they might have confidence in him, that, though thus absent, he would cheer and animate them by his spirit, until he should receive them to himself in the presence of the Father, where are joys forevermore. Ps. xvi. 11.

26. *The Comforter, &c.* In this verse is contained a further explanation of what Jesus "meant by the Comforter, the Paraclete, or Advocate. It was not a person, but the Holy Spirit of God, a divine influence, which the Father would communicate in the name and through the mediation of Christ, and which would at once revive the holy impressions they had already received from their Master, bringing his teachings back freshly to their minds, and also guiding and directing them into all further truth necessary to the apostolic

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said

office."—*Livermore.* ¶ *Teach you all things, &c.* It must not be forgotten, that the apostles were specially interested in this assurance ; See John xvi. 13. They alone had urgent need of such an infallible guide. See note on ver. 16.

27. *Peace I leave with you.* "Peace be with thee" was a common form of Jewish benediction, and was long preserved in the Christian Church. This was not an unmeaning phrase, as here used by our Lord. He invoked peace upon his disciples ; and he had already taken measures to secure it. He had explained the propriety of his departure ; he assured them he was going to a place of superior purity and blessedness ; that, during his absence, they should not be left unprotected, but should enjoy the guidance and sustaining influence of the divine spirit ; and that in due time he would return and receive them to himself, and admit them to the full enjoyment of that heavenly home into which he, as their forerunner, was about to enter. Heb. vi. 20. We may also understand him as referring to that peace of mind which results from such love and obedience as he here exhorted his disciples to cultivate and practise. As if he had said, if you carefully observe what I have now imparted to you, though I be absent, you shall enjoy peace. ¶ *Not as the world giveth, &c.* My invocation of peace is not hollow and heartless, as such invocations oftentimes are. I labor to give you peace, and will not discontinue my efforts on your behalf after I shall depart from you. Or, we may understand the meaning to be, the blessing which I invoke, and which you shall receive through me, is more valuable than those bestowed by mankind generally ; it is more rich, substantial, satisfactory and abiding. Those often bring care and anxiety ; this gives peace and quietness. Those are often empty and delusory ; this is real and genuine. Those are often of a perish

unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you be-

ing nature; this is perpetual, such as man can neither give nor take away. ¶ *Be troubled*, &c. See note on ver. 1. The exhortation is repeated, its reasonableness having been fully sustained and illustrated.

28. *Ye have heard*, &c. See notes on ver. 2, 3. ¶ *If ye loved me*, &c. We should not understand our Lord to intimate that his disciples had no love for him. The contrary is abundantly evident. The meaning is this. True love for any person induces a desire for his welfare and happiness. By departing to my Father, my welfare will be promoted, and my happiness increased. Love for me would induce you to rejoice at this accession to my happiness. If you were moved only by such love, you would thus rejoice. But you think of yourselves more than of me. You mourn your own loss more than you rejoice at my gain. Their conduct, however unreasonable in theory, was true to nature in practice. When our friends depart, and we consign their bodies to the grave, however firmly we believe that it is well with them, and that they are more happy than they could be here, we mourn that we are left desolate. And with all the aid we can derive from philosophy and faith, a melancholy sadness oppresses us. For a time, at least, we realize our own loss more sensibly than their gain, and our sorrow exceeds our joy. Thanks be to God for the assurance, that when we shall have been gathered together in the home prepared for us, we shall no more be made sad by separation, but shall perpetually enjoy the society of each other, in his presence and in presence of Jesus Christ his Son. ¶ *I go unto the Father*. That is, where his presence is more peculiarly manifested than on the earth. Else how should it be styled an approach to him, or a cause for rejoicing? Unless, by departing from his disciples and going to his Father, Jesus was admitted to the more manifest presence and perfect enjoyment of God than he or his disciples realized through the influence and communion of the divine spirit here, it is not

fore it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

easy to perceive in what respect he received advantage from the change, or why his disciples should rejoice at it. It cannot admit of much doubt, that the idea here suggested is similar to that in John xvi. 28; xvii. 5. See notes on ver. 2, 3. ¶ *Greater than I*. More powerful, wise, and good. Jesus uniformly acknowledged God as the original and supreme source of power, wisdom, goodness, and all perfection. The measure of either, or all, which he possessed, was bestowed on him by the Father. To that Father he was now to return from the earth, and to reassume the glory and happiness which he enjoyed before he came into the world. John xvii. 5. And additional glory was also to be bestowed. Phil. ii. 8-11. This advantage, to be derived through his return to his Father, is assigned as a reason why his disciples should rejoice, rather than mourn and lament.

29. *Before it come to pass*. That is, before my crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and before the Comforter cometh to you. The idea is, that their faith in him as a divine messenger might be confirmed by the power he exhibited of foretelling what should afterwards come to pass. When they should witness the exact accomplishment of the things he had foretold, their confidence in him would be the more strong; and the more firm would be their belief that his assurances, concerning their own future life and blessedness, and the salvation of that world which he came to save, would also be fully and punctually verified.

30. *I will not talk much*, &c. Or, I shall not talk much. Little time remained for conversation. Within a few hours, he was apprehended; they were terrified and scattered; and they conversed no more together on earth, except during a few brief interviews after his resurrection. ¶ *The prince of this world cometh*. See note on John xii. 31. ¶ *Hath nothing in me*. "Finds no crime or guilt in me, whereon to ground a just charge and condemnation; for even Judas, Pilate, Herod and the centurion, testified to the perfect inno-

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

cence of Jesus. Or, he finds in me no susceptibility or tendency to sin, nothing to lead me to swerve from the path of rectitude and God."—*Livermore*. It is not improbable, that our Lord had special reference to the agonizing scene in the garden, when the final struggle took place between human infirmity and spiritual fortitude; between his instinctive dread of suffering and his filial resolve to be obedient to the Father's will, even unto the death of the cross. Phil. ii. 8. Whatever tempts to disobedience may be regarded as evil. Jesus was thus tempted in the wilderness, and the tempter is called *Satan* and the *devil*; he was thus tempted in the garden, but the tempter is not named; here, a tempter is referred to, and styled *prince of this world*. In each case, the substantial idea is, that which tempts to disobedience, or to the commission of sin. None of these temptations overpowered our Lord, or gained any advantage over him. He was without sin, though tempted at all points. Heb. iv. 15. Evil could not prevail against him, having nothing in him kindred to its own nature. See notes on Matt. iv. 1—11; xxvi. 36—44; Luke xxii. 40—46.

31. *That the world may know, &c.* I shall endure this final struggle, and shall also submit to death, that the world may have full evidence, both that I keenly feel the sufferings I undergo, and that I so sincerely love the Father as to obey his will, as well in this painful sacrifice as in other respects. \* That it might not be alleged that his virtue had not been subjected to trial. It was subjected. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He passed through the severest forms of temptation, that it might be seen and known that his holiness was proof to all trial. In all things he obeyed. And he showed that, in the face of calamities, persecutions and temptations, he was still disposed to obey his Father. This he did, that the world might know that he loved the Father. So should we bear trials, and resist temptations. And so through persecution

## CHAPTER XV.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that bear-

and calamity should we show that we are actuated by the love of God."—*Barnes*. As obedience to the commandments of Christ is the fruit and proof of our love to him, ver. 15, 21, so did his obedience demonstrate his love to the Father. ¶ *Arise, let us go hence*. Some commentators suppose our Lord and his disciples now left not only the table, but the room where they had been sitting, and departed for the mount of Olives; and that what is contained in the three succeeding chapters was uttered on their way thither. But, from John xviii. 1, it is evident that Jesus not only addressed his disciples, ch. xv., xvi., but also offered prayer to God, ch. xvii., before they left Jerusalem; for it was not until "after he had spoken these words," that "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, (which was the easterly boundary of Jerusalem,) where was a garden;" namely, Gethsemane, on the westerly side of the mount of Olives. Although he might converse with his disciples on the way, and instruct and console them, it seems not probable that he would thus *pray* in the public streets,—a practice which he condemned, Matt. vi. 5, 6. It is more natural to suppose they remained in the room where they had eaten the passover, until all *these words* were *spoken*, though they arose from the table.

This chapter is full of consolation, to them who mourn and are troubled. For notwithstanding its special reference to the apostles, its general principles are applicable to all; and all are encouraged to trust in God as their Father, and to regard his house as their everlasting home.

## CHAPTER XV.

1. *I am the true vine*. It is agreed, I believe, by all commentators, that this portion of our Lord's discourse was delivered after the institution of the Supper; and by many it is supposed that the imagery here used was suggested by "the fruit of the vine," Luke xxii. 18, of which they had just partaken in such a solemn manner. Those who be-

eth not fruit, he taketh away : and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

lieve Jesus had left the house and was now on his way towards the garden, suppose he adopted this imagery from the vines which bordered their way thither. Yet it must not be overlooked, that this was a common figure among the Jews, and must have been familiar to the disciples, whether or not it was selected for either of the reasons already mentioned. See Ps. lxxx. 14, 15 ; Isa. v. 1—7 ; Jer. ii. 21. By calling himself a true vine, our Lord may be understood to contrast himself with that "degenerate plant of a strange vine," mentioned by Jeremiah, ii. 21. In the following verses, he styles his disciples branches of the vine, or members of himself. See Rom. xii. 4, 5 ; Eph. iv. 15, 16. This figure of a vine with its branches is very expressive. For as all the branches derive nourishment from the earth through the body of the vine, so Jesus is the chosen and appointed medium or mediator, through whom God communicates all spiritual blessings to mankind. We may suppose he could have sanctified and saved the world, without the intervention of any agent ; yet it pleased him to send his Son to save his people from their sins, and to be the Saviour of the world, Matt. i. 21 ; 1 John iv. 14 ; and the scriptures represent that these blessings are bestowed through him. ¶ *Husbandman*. More properly, vine-dresser. Thus, in this short phrase, is indicated the intimate union between Jesus and his disciples, and the care exercised over them by their common Father.

2. *Beareth not fruit*. The reference is to unfaithful or unprofitable disciples. The proper fruit of the Spirit is described by the apostle, Gal. v. 22—24. If these virtues and graces abound not in professed disciples, their professions are vain, and they are unfruitful branches. ¶ *He taketh away*. Cutteth off. Thus the vine-dresser removes dead and unfruitful branches from the vine, that the healthy portions may not suffer injury by them ; and thus should unfruitful professors be removed, that the genuine disciples might not be corrupted by contact with them, or suffer in the estimation of others in consequence of

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you

their connexion. "He here refers to such cases as that of Judas, the unbelieving Jews, the apostatizing disciples, and all false and merely nominal Christians."—*Barnes*. It is perhaps doubtful, whether the "unbelieving Jews" should be included ; as the reference seems to be particularly to professed disciples. See further on ver. 6. ¶ *Every branch that beareth fruit*. That is, true and faithful disciples those who manifest their love by obedience, who love God and men, and whose language and conduct bear the impress of such love. ¶ *Purgeth*. Rather prunes, or divests it of all in cumberances, which might hinder its fruitfulness. Many trials, which honest and sincere Christians undergo, have this profitable effect upon them. They are excited to new activity ; their affections are drawn from improper objects, and more firmly fixed on God and holiness ; impediments in their path are removed ; and they are thus rendered more fruitful. "God often takes away the property of his people, their children, or other idols. He removes the objects which bind their affections, and which render them inactive."—*Barnes*. He also excites them by the influence of his spirit ; and, by various methods, rouses them to increased activity in his service, and to a more absolute devotion to his most holy will.

3. *Now ye are clean, &c.* The import of this word here is not so manifest in the translation as in the original. It will be seen that the words *airei*, (*αἱρεῖ*), *taketh away*, and *kathairei*, (*καθαίρει*), *purgeth*, or *pruneth*, in ver. 2, and *katharoi*, (*καθαροί*), *clean*, in this place, are of kindred form and signification. The word *clean*, here, does not denote absolute purity ; but the idea is, that the disciples had already been pruned or disencumbered of much which might have impeded them in the performance of their duty. They had already forsaken their homes, their houses, lands, families, and friends ; so that as soon as their eyes should fully behold the true spiritual character of the Messiah and his kingdom, they were already prepared to go forth to their field of labor

**As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine : no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth

without let or hindrance. ¶ *Through the word, &c.* This preparation for fruitfulness, this lopping off of incumbrances which would otherwise have interfered with their devotion to their Master's service, had been accomplished by his previous instructions. See Matt. x. 37, 38 ; Mark x. 23—31 ; Luke xiv. 25—33.

4. *Abide in me.* Remain faithful to me. Cherish that spirit which unites you to me. Continue to be my true and devoted disciples, loving me and my cause more devotedly than any earthly object. Make proof of your love by obeying my commandments and imitating my example. Hold fast your confidence in me, whatever trials you may yet be called to endure. ¶ *And I in you.* The union shall be reciprocal. As long as you thus remain attached to me, you shall receive through me that spiritual sustenance which shall sustain and encourage you, and make you fruitful in good works. ¶ *As the branch cannot, &c.* When the branch is separated from the stock, it derives no more nourishment. So the continuance of your union to me by a spirit of faith, is indispensably necessary to growth in grace, and fruitfulness in works of true piety and holiness. See note on ver. 5.

5. *I am the vine.* See note on ver. 1. *Ye are the branches.* The fact is here distinctly stated, which is implied in ver. 2—4. The disciples were united to Jesus, as the branches to the vine, and in like manner dependent on him for spiritual nourishment, whereby they should become fruitful in holiness. ¶ *Bringeth forth much fruit.* See ver. 2, 4. ¶ *Ye can do nothing.* Meaning, of course, that they could not do what is signified by bringing forth much fruit. Those who were never united to Jesus by faith and those who apostatized from him, both which classes acted *without* his special direction and assistance, could do and did do many evil things. The general phrase, therefore, must be modified by the subject to

forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

which it was evidently applied. Nor need we understand, literally, that none but true disciples of Jesus, in faith as well as in spirit, could do *any* good thing ; because many who never heard of his name had cultivated the domestic and social affections ; had manifested love to their families, and kindness to their fellow-men ; and there is no good reason to doubt, that many in this condition, like Cornelius the centurion, had feared God and wrought righteousness, and that their prayers and virtues were acceptable to God. Acts x. 2, 35. The meaning seems to be this ; without a full assurance of faith in me, and that spiritual light, and energy, and support, which can only be derived through me, you can do nothing for the advancement of my cause among men, after my departure. See note on ver. 3. In a more general sense, this language may imply that, if any should apostatize, after having witnessed such ample evidence of our Lord's Messiahship, he would manifest such feebleness of purpose, such effeminate timidity, or such perverseness of spirit, that no good might be expected of him ; he would not dare, or would not choose, to obey those precepts of divine wisdom which conduct men in the path of holiness.

6. *He is cast forth, &c.* The several terms of rejection, in this verse, the *casting forth*, the *withering*, and the *burning in the fire*, express the same idea, substantially, which is embraced in Matt. v. 13. If any of the apostles or primitive disciples should apostatize, they would become unserviceable in the great work of converting the world to the truth, and should be rejected and cast out from the company of the faithful, as salt which has lost its saltness is trodden under foot, or as unfruitful and dead branches are removed from the vine and used for fuel. So far as the passage may be applicable to Christians generally, it denotes the propriety of removing from the church such members as, by their evil works, impede the exertions of the faithful, hang as a

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

dead weight upon them, and bring disgrace and reproach upon the church. By thus lopping off the dead branches of the vine, or casting forth the unfruitful and unworthy members of the church, the remainder, the sound portion is freed from its incumbrances, and rendered more active; it becomes more fruitful of good in itself, and exercises a more healthy and vigorous influence upon the world. But the primary reference, I conceive, like Matt. v. 13, was to the apostles and first preachers of the gospel to the world which was then lying in darkness and wickedness. See notes on ver. 5, 7.

7. *If ye abide, &c.* If ye remain faithful, steadfast in faith, and sincerely devoted to me. ¶ *And my words, &c.* My doctrines; the truths I have taught you; my commands, instructions, warnings, and promises. ¶ *Abide in you.* More is here implied than a mere remembrance of the words spoken. What Jesus communicated was to abide in them as a living principle of faith and conduct. They were to be true to his doctrine and true to his spirit, as well as steadfast in the profession of his name. ¶ *Ye shall ask what ye will, &c.* See note on Matt. xviii. 19, 20. This promise is not to be understood as of universal application, except in a modified sense. Many devoted Christians ignorantly ask what would injure them if bestowed; but their heavenly Father will bless them by withholding such things, as well as by bestowing what they really need. Only those who received the Holy Ghost were infallibly guided in their supplications. Only of them was it true, that all their petitions were so proper and judicious that whatsoever they asked was bestowed upon them. And only to them, I apprehend, has this text primary reference. See ver. 16. And even in respect to them, the promise should be understood with some qualification. See 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

8. *Herein is my Father glorified, &c.* That is, God is honored, in your fruitfulness. ¶ *Bear much fruit.* God is honored by the fruits of righteousness in all his children, because his laws are

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me,

thus demonstrated to be holy, just, and good, and because by obedience his children attain a moral resemblance to himself, promote the welfare of their fellow men, and secure their own peace and happiness. But the reference, here as before, is primarily to the apostles and early heralds of the cross. By their faithfulness in obeying the commands of their Master and proclaiming his gospel, they converted multitudes to the truth; they went forth as laborers into the fields which were then white to harvest. John iv. 35, and gathered much fruit. Their labors were faithful, diligent, and successful. Men were converted to the truth, their hearts purified, their conduct reformed, their darkness dispelled, their hopes excited, and their confidence fixed on their heavenly Father manifested in his Son. Thus was God honored, by the augmentation of human happiness. ¶ *So shall ye be my disciples.* By such faithfulness, diligence, and obedience, you shall prove yourselves to be honest and sincere disciples. He had before assured them that unless they divested themselves of all incumbrances which might interfere with their entire devotion to his cause, or impede their labors for its establishment among men, they could not be his disciples. Matt. x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 26, 27. He now declares that, in order to sustain the character of disciples, they must be active and diligent; not only that they must be able to work, but that they must labor and perform much good. So should they be disciples of him who went about doing good, and sacrificed even his life in the great cause of promoting human happiness. And what was especially true concerning the apostles and their associates is also true, in some measure, in regard to all Christians. They cannot perform so great a work as the apostles, because they are not able to speak with tongues and perform miracles, by the aid of the Holy Ghost. But they may show, by their obedience, by their conformity to the divine law, by their cultivation of the Christian graces, and by their efforts to promote the happiness of mankind, that they have learned in the school of Christ

so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;

and are his true disciples. All other professions of discipleship are utterly vain and unsatisfactory. The world will not acknowledge a man to be a disciple of Christ, whose conduct is inconsistent with Christ's spirit and precepts; nor will they lend a willing ear to his exhortations. Such a one cannot be successful in winning souls to Christ; for his own example repels more powerfully than his entreaties attract. See Rom. ii. 17—24.

9. *As the Father—so have I, &c.* With similar sincerity and fervency, both which are fully illustrated in ver. 13, and Rom. v. 6—8. Like his heavenly Father, Jesus so loved the world, the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, that he gave his life for all, even for sinners, that the world might be saved. But besides this love, which extends equally to all, and which will continue active until its utmost desire shall be gratified, our Lord here refers to a peculiar love cherished towards the obedient, whose hearts by the influence of the divine spirit, were already conformed to the image of God's Son; Rom. viii. 29; namely, a love of approbation. So God loved or approved his Son, because he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and because he was obedient in all things, even unto the death of the cross. Phil. ii. 8—11; Heb. ii. 9; iii. 1—6; vii. 26. In like manner did Jesus love or approve his faithful disciples. And it is this kind of love or approbation which is here chiefly intended. ¶ *Continue ye in my love.* That is, continue to deserve my approbation, my approving love. See ver. 10. That love which induced Jesus to come forth from the Father and enter this world, John xvi. 23, and to labor, suffer, and die, for the world, did not depend for its permanence on the virtue or holiness of men; for this love he entertained, and this sacrifice he made in proof of its sincerity, while they were yet sinners. Rom. v. 8. But his approving love could extend only to them who imbibed his spirit, imitated his example, and obeyed his commands. This love the disciples had enjoyed; for though they misunderstood the great

even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken

object of their Master's mission, they were sincerely attached to him; they had already caught something of his spirit, and had forsaken all, that they might obey his commands without hindrance. He exhorted them to remain faithful, that his approving love might continue unabated.

10. *If ye keep, &c.* The method is here indicated, by which the disciples might continue to enjoy the approving love of their Master; namely, by obeying his commandments. He often made obedience a test of discipleship and of love to him. John xiii. 35; xiv. 15. Here it is proposed as a means of enjoying his approbation. See notes on John xiv. 23, 24. And an assurance is given, that the condition is not unreasonable, inasmuch as the Father's approbation of the Son was in like manner founded on his obedience. See Phil. ii. 8—11. Some understand this and the preceding verse as an injunction that the disciples should continue to love their Master, rather than that they should continue to deserve his approbation and love. The phrase *continue in my love*, ver. 9, is capable of this signification; yet the interpretation I have given seems more in harmony with the general scope of this portion of the address, and is equally consistent with the form of expression used. This construction is given by Campbell, and sustained thus: "It is most natural to suppose, that, when our Lord enjoined them to continue in a particular state, it would be in that state wherein he had signified that they then were. Now this state is manifestly that of being loved by him; of which mention is made in the words immediately preceding. 'As the Father loveth me,' says he, 'so I love you; continue in my love. Ye possess my love at present, continue to possess it.' But here a doubting might arise in their minds, 'how shall we continue to possess it? or how shall we know that we continue to possess it?' To obviate all such exceptions, he adds, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall continue to possess my love; as I have kept my Father's, and continue to possess his love.' In the other

unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

way explained, besides that the connection is loose, the passage is not so significant."

11. *These things.* Namely, all the instructions and assurances, from the commencement of chap. xiii. The whole discourse was designed, not only to calm their troubled minds at that time, but to fortify them against the trials and temptations which would subsequently be encountered; to encourage them to persevere even unto the end, through the influence of an unwavering confidence in him and a full assurance that he approved and sympathized with them. ¶ *That my joy might remain in you.* Literally, "That my joy in you may remain." By thus preserving the same order of words as in the original, the sense is more clear and obvious. According to the common translation, if any distinct idea be conveyed, it is that the joy of Christ should dwell in his disciples. But it is not easy to conceive how the joy or happiness of one person can dwell in another or others. Prov. xiv. 10. Joy may be shared by sympathy, and thus may we "rejoice with them that do rejoice," Rom. xii. 15; yet such seems not to be the idea here expressed. But, according to the literal construction of the original, the idea is, that the joy of Jesus in his disciples, that is, his approbation of their obedience and fidelity, of their attachment to him and their purity of purpose, would remain, so long as they remained thus obedient, and faithful, and affectionate, and devoted. In this interpretation, several commentators agree, in substance. "That the joy which I have on account of your continuing firm and unshaken in my doctrine may be lasting."—*Pearce*. "That you may be so fortified and animated against the temptations of life, that my joy and complacency in you, as my faithful friends, might still continue."—*Doddridge*. ¶ *And that your joy might be full.* Or, complete. Not only would their cultivation of the Christian virtues and graces, their faith, love, confidence, obedience, purity, fortitude, patience, and perseverance, afford joy to their Master, but their own happiness should thereby be secured. In the midst of perils and

12 This is my commandment That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

temptations, they should be calm and unmoved; under disappointments and bereavements, they should be patient and trustful; and in suffering and death, they should be sustained and cheered, by a consciousness of divine approbation and the hope of immortal life and blessedness. This effect of the instructions of Jesus and the communication of his spirit is visible in the subsequent history of his disciples. Though disheartened and scattered at first, as sheep when the shepherd is smitten, they were soon reassured by the operation of the spirit, John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; and from that time forth, whatever their trials and outward afflictions, they uniformly exhibited the most lofty courage and serenity of mind; and they gave frequent and earnest utterance to the fulness of their joy. Acts iv. 13; v. 27—32, 41; xx. 23, 24; Rom. v. 2—5; xv. 13; 1 Thess. i. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

12. *My commandment, &c.* See note on John xiii. 34. The pervading spirit of the gospel of Christ is love, and this is its distinguishing characteristic. The love of God to men was the cause whence originated the mission of Jesus for the salvation of the world. John iii. 16, 17; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10. The purification of the human heart from sinfulness, and its attachment to God as the object of the highest affection and homage, is wrought by the self-same spirit of love. Rom. ii. 4; 1 John iv. 11, 19. The great duty required of men, as the evidence and proper result of the work of purification in their hearts, is, that they love God supremely, and love mankind sincerely and fervently. Matt. v. 43—48; xxii. 37—40. No other system of religion displayed such love on the part of God, or required such unbounded love on the part of men. In its origin, its progress, its requirements, its results, the gospel bears the impress of love in ineffaceable characters. In its most sublime descriptions of God, it represents him as a Being to be loved, not dreaded. And in the darkest shades of its delineation of the human character, there is still so much light, that men are exhibited as worthy of love, not hatred. The effect produced on men by the power of the



13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not gospel is such as to render them still more lovely, and to increase their attachment to each other, while it excites the approbation and love, and augments the joy, of Him who "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. i. 10. See note on ver. 11.

13. *Greater love, &c.* Jesus had exhorted his disciples to love each other as he had loved them, ver. 12. He here appeals to the proof he should soon give of the sincerity of his love. No man had ever exhibited more fervent and devoted love than to lay down his life for his friends. This he was about to do. Yea more; he laid down his life for enemies as well as friends; for those who hated him, persecuted him, and were so full of malice and malignity that they even mocked his dying agonies. For such he prayed, and for such he died. If dying for friends afford incontestable proof of love, how much more, dying for enemies! Luke xxiii. 34, 35; Rom. v. 6—10; 1 John iv. 9, 10. And because his love was thus fervent and sincere, because it endured unto the end, and was demonstrated by his death on the cross, God hath given him a name which is above every name, and appointed that he shall draw all men unto himself and receive the homage of the whole intelligent universe; God himself only being excepted from the number of his willing subjects. John xii. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 24—23; Phil. ii. 8—11. Heb. ch. i.

14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do, &c.* The proper proof of discipleship, or of friendship to Christ, consists not in *saying*, but in *doing*; not in professions, but in obedience. Not every one that is even clamorous in exclaiming Lord, Lord, is to be accounted a true disciple. But he who humbly reverences, adores, and loves God, cherishes a spirit of affectionate gratitude to his Son, and yields a conscientious obedience to the divine commandments,—he it is whom Jesus acknowledges as a friend and disciple; in him he rejoices; with him he dwells by his spirit; and in him he will cause "righteousness, and

servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" to dwell richly and constantly. See notes on John xiv. 15, 21.

15. *I call you not servants.* Jesus had heretofore frequently named himself and disciples as sustaining the relation of Master and servants, as in Matt. x. 24, 25; John xiii. 13—16; and once he used the same phraseology in this address, ver. 20, in reference to what he had formerly said to them. He here declares that he will no longer recognize that relation; but will rather regard them as *friends*, by which appellation he had once before addressed them. Luke xii. 4. ¶ *The servant knoweth not, &c.* The contrast here expressed seems to be this; a servant is not expected to comprehend the plans or designs of his master, but obedience is required simply as a token of due subjection to authority; the servant obeys, not because he perceives any propriety in the command, but solely because he is commanded by his master. Far different the obedience which Jesus required of his disciples. He would have them obey him because they loved him, and were in the highest sense his friends; moreover, he explained to them the reasonableness of his commands, showing them that the duties required were of such nature that their performance would not only be satisfactory and gratifying to him, but productive of the highest advantage and happiness to themselves. Henceforth, therefore, he would not have them yield that blind obedience which servants render to masters, obeying because they must on penalty of punishment; but he desired that hearty and cheerful obedience which flows from friendship, or springs from gratitude and a clear perception that the commandments are not grievous but merciful and kind. Such appears to be the idea naturally involved in this passage. And notwithstanding its primary and direct application to the disciples, it embraces a general principle, equally applicable to all Christians. ¶ *Lord doeth.* That is, what he designs to do; what object is to be

I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain : that whatsoever ye

accomplished by the labor required. ¶ *I have called*, &c. "He does not mean that the usual appellation which he had given them had been that of friends, but that such was the title which he had now given them."—*Barnes*. To the same purpose, Campbell translates the phrase, "I name you friends," which well expresses the idea, but is not an exact translation. ¶ *All things*, &c. That is, all things necessary for their instruction and comfort ; or the meaning may be, that all which he had declared was according to what he had heard of the Father. See note on John vii. 16. He had treated them as friends, by confiding to them the will of the Father, and making them acquainted with his designs.

16. *Ye have not chosen me, but*, &c. It must be recollected, that the apostles were here specially addressed. Jesus declared that they had not chosen him as a Teacher, but that he had chosen or elected them to be apostles, with reference to a particular labor allotted to them. See note on Matt. xx. 16. It is also true, that in the work of purification generally, by which men are made true disciples of Jesus, the love of God precedes the love of man, and the heart is influenced by such means as God appoints. In other words, men do not make the first offer of themselves as servants to God, but he calls them by his spirit, and by the intervention of proper means, into his moral vineyard. John vi. 44. But what is said here is to be understood rather of *election* to apostleship, than of conversion to truth and godliness in its more general sense. ¶ *Ordained you*. Not by imposition of hands and other ceremonies now usual in the *ordination* of men to the work of the ministry. But the meaning is, he had appointed, designated, or set them apart to the great work of proclaiming his truth to the world, and illustrating it by their lives. ¶ *Bring forth fruit*. "That you should be rich in good works ; faithful and successful in spreading my gospel. This was the great work to which they were set apart, and this they faithfully accomplished. It may be added that this is

shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you That ye love one another.

the great end for which Christians are chosen. It is not to be idle, or useless, or simply to seek enjoyment. It is to do good, and to spread as far as possible the rich temporal and spiritual blessings which the gospel is fitted to confer on mankind."—*Barnes*. To this great work of the apostles, frequent reference is had in this address. See note on ver. 5. It was in this, especially, that he desired them to be fruitful. It is implied, of course, that they should exhibit the fruit of grace in their own hearts ; otherwise they would have been unworthy disciples and unsuccessful apostles. Their success very much depended on the example of the Christian virtues and graces, which they should display to the world. ¶ *That your fruit should remain*, or, be permanent. They were to establish the cause of the gospel so firmly that it should not be overthrown. To do this, unremitted faithfulness and activity on their part was indispensable. Such was the work to which they were *chosen* and *ordained* ; their Master informed them that they were selected and prepared by him for this very purpose, and exhorted them to fulfil their ministry with patience and confidence ; and he assured them that they should be aided and guided by the Holy Spirit of truth, and cheered by his smiles of approbation. ¶ *Whatsoever ye shall ask*, &c. See notes on ver. 7, and Matt. xviii. 19.

17. *That ye love one another*. This very important command is frequently repeated. John xiii. 34, 35 ; ver. 12. The duty required is essential to the Christian character, inasmuch as without it, all other acts professedly religious are vain. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3 ; 1 John iii. 10, 11, 14 ; iv. 7, 8, 20, 21. It is therefore binding on all men, and cannot be too earnestly inculcated or too faithfully and fervently practised. But, in this place, the command has a peculiar force. The apostles were reminded that *union* would be an important element in their success. They were to consider themselves engaged in a common cause, under the direction of a common Master and friend, and each should consider the success of others to be as favorable

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world to himself as to them. They were not to waste their energies, by striving with each other for precedence, but faithfully to devote all their powers to the accomplishment of the great work assigned them.

18. *If the world hate, &c.* The necessity of love and union was the more urgent, because so general and violent opposition was to be encountered. The gospel of Christ was designed to displace and overthrow existing institutions to which the world was much attached. And it required and enforced a degree of purity and spiritual devotion with which the world was unacquainted. The spirit of the gospel was opposite to the spirit of the world; hence the world hated both it and its promulgator; and its hatred was naturally transferred to his followers, after it had destroyed him. It may be worthy of observation, that, by the *world* in this place, is chiefly designated the *professedly* religious portion of the community; those who preserved a most commendable gravity of demeanor, and were most careful observers of forms and ceremonies, as a cloak to their inward impurity and corruption. The common people heard Jesus gladly, until they were deceived by their leaders and made to regard him as a blasphemer. Publicans, and sinners, and harlots, despised by the scribes and Pharisees as the very offscouring of the earth, lent a willing ear to his instructions, and many of them believed; but the proud and haughty rulers, vain of their own wisdom and formal godliness, hated him, and pursued him with unrelenting fury, until they had nailed him to the cross. This is evident from the whole current of the narrative contained in the gospels. See, for example, Matt. xxi. 31, 32; ch. xxiii.; Mark xii. 37—40; Luke xv. 1, 2; xxii. 2; xxiii. 35; John vii. 46—49; xi. 47—53; xii. 10, 11; xviii. 3. In like manner, the opposition which the apostles encountered was almost exclusively instigated by the scribes and Pharisees among the

world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept

Jews, and by the ostensibly most devout among the heathen idolaters. Acts iv. 13—21; v. 17, 18, 33, 40; xiii. 50; xix. 24—29. In short, Jesus and his disciples were hated by the professedly religious, who could not abide the idea that he should interfere with their doctrines or ceremonies, rather than by the more openly careless or ungodly, who are now generally denominated the *world*. This was perfectly natural; and the fact ought not to be overlooked or disregarded.

19. *If ye were of the world, &c.* The reason why they should be hated is here explained. If they had flattered the pride, justified the hypocrisy, and excused the ungodliness, of the world, if they had adopted the follies and vices of the world, they would not have been hated. But they had been instructed to do differently. They were to imitate their Master, and manifest their love for the world, by striving to reform the vicious; to convert men from the error of their ways; to purify their hearts from evil works; to eradicate their ambitious and proud hopes of a temporal dominion; to teach them to govern their own passions in all humility; to convince them that mere formal worship was unprofitable, and persuade them to worship God in spirit and in truth; to make them feel that love to God and love to man were indispensable requisites to true godliness. This was in direct opposition to the principles and practices of the world, and excited its hatred. ¶ *Chosen you out, &c.* See note on ver. 16. Jesus had selected them, and prepared them for the ministry to which he appointed them, by his instruction, by the force of his example, and by the influence of his spirit. ¶ *Therefore.* Because he had made them so much like himself, and so unlike the painted hypocrites, here denominated the *world*, it followed naturally that the world should hate them, even as it had hated him.

20. *Remember the word, &c.* See Matt. x. 24, 25. Jesus reminded him

my saying they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake,

disciples that they had previously been admonished of this hatred and opposition. And he repeated the declaration, that, while they cherished his spirit and imitated his example, they must expect to share in his success and his persecutions. The same class of men, who had hated and persecuted him, would hate and persecute them. And the same class, who had heard his word with patience and gladness, would listen in like manner to them. And the event verified the prediction. Among the Jews, scarcely any of the priesthood and their sycophants believed the testimony of the apostles; but they, and as many as they could deceive or control by their influence, persevered in the most bitter opposition, until destruction came upon them to the uttermost. Nearly all the converts among the Jews were from among the common people. And to a very considerable extent, the same holds true in regard to the heathen, in the apostolic age. But the reference is chiefly to the Jews; for among them only had Jesus labored, and by them only had he been persecuted.

21. *For my name's sake.* On my account. Because you are my friends, and partakers of my spirit. Because you obey my commands and execute the ministry to which I have appointed you. On account of this resemblance to me in your spirit and actions, they will persecute you as they have persecuted me. ¶ *Because they know not him, &c.* Because they will not understand that God has sent me on this mission of mercy to mankind. The Jews professed to know God; and in one sense they did know him; they recognized his existence, and acknowledged their obligation to obey him. But they mistook his character and designs. And especially they would not believe that he had sent Jesus as the Messiah,—one so humble, when they expected a glorious prince; one who reproved them for their vices, when they expected to be extolled for their formal piety; one who taught the impartial love of God and his design to save the world, when they expected not only to tread the Gentiles and sinners under foot in this

because they know not him **tha.** sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin:

world, but to have them excluded from their society in the world to come. The spirit of our Lord's instructions, and the character of his life and conduct, were so entirely different from their anticipations concerning the Messiah, that they utterly rejected him, and denied that God had sent him. See John vii. 28; viii. 19.

22. *Spoken unto them.* Proclaimed to them the will and character of God, and the duty and destiny of men. Probably Jesus here referred to the arguments he had offered in proof of his Messiahship; to that wisdom which none could gainsay or resist, which filled his hearers with astonishment, and caused them to exclaim, "never man spake like this man." John vii. 46. He had proved by irresistible arguments, and indeed the pure and divine nature of his doctrine furnished undeniable proof, that he came by appointment of God, to speak in his name. Upon all this evidence they had resolutely closed their eyes, and persisted in representing Jesus as an impostor. ¶ *They had not had sin.* That is, the particular sin of unbelief in the Son of God, and rejection of the offered blessing. Of other sins, they were mournfully guilty. That our Lord cannot be understood to speak of sinfulness generally, is manifest from the fact that all men were sinners before he personally addressed them or came into the world. Indeed, he came for the express purpose of saving them from their sins, and calling not the righteous but sinners to repentance. Matt. i. 21; ix. 13. But of the particular sin of unbelief the Jews became guilty, by hearing and rejecting his testimony. The privilege which they enjoyed, and which, if rightly improved, would have become a savor of life unto life, became a savor of death unto death through their misimprovement of it. 2 Cor. ii. 16. By this addition to their former sinfulness, their unbelief resulting in their utter rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, they filled the measure of their iniquity, and vengeance came upon them to the uttermost. Matt. xxiii. 32; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. Their punishment was proportioned to their offence. As their priv-

but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man

illeges for attaining light and purity exceeded those of other men, it was fitting that their retribution should be more exemplary. Such is the rule of divine justice. Luke xii. 47, 48. ¶ *No cloak for their sin.* No covering or excuse. They who never heard of Jesus might plead a sufficient excuse for not believing on him; for it is clearly impossible that any should believe, until the object of faith is presented to the mind. Not so the Jews: they saw Jesus; they heard his words of more than mortal wisdom and power; they listened to the arguments he urged in proof of his divine mission; and still they rejected him. They were without excuse, therefore, and their stubborn unbelief could not be concealed.

23. *He that hateth me, &c.* As Jesus proclaimed the will of God, and exhibited his character, being himself the bright and glorious image of the Father, hatred of him necessarily implied virtual hatred of his Father also. An insult to an ambassador is always regarded as an insult to the government which he represents; much more should hatred of the blessed Jesus be construed as hatred of the Father, since he was not only the Father's ambassador to men, but the representative also of his person and his glorious attributes. See Matt. x. 40; Mark ix. 37; John xii. 44—50.

24. *If I had not done, &c.* The evidence which Jesus exhibited of his Messiahship was two-fold,—his words and his works. Either of these might have been sufficient; together, they furnished such conclusive evidence, that they who withstood its force, and remained in unbelief, were inexcusable. Of his words, or his teaching and his arguments, Jesus speaks in ver. 22; in this verse, of his works, or miracles. If he had not wrought such wonders, if he had not done in their sight such deeds as no man could do without divine assistance, their unbelief in him would not have been criminal; but having displayed before their eyes this testimony, they manifested their hatred of God, by rejecting **u** and hating Jesus. He confidently

did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated

appealed to the works which God did by him, in proof that he was the Son of God. John xiv. 10, 11; See Acts ii. 22. There are men styled Christians, who deny the validity of the evidence arising from the miracles of Jesus. I remark, (1.) Either those who rejected that testimony and remained in unbelief were criminal, or they were not, on account of that rejection. If they were not, then the matter is wrongly represented here. If they were, then the evidence was good and conclusive. (2.) It follows, that to deny the validity of this evidence, is substantially to assert, either that Jesus did not understand what was and what was not good and sufficient evidence, or that he wilfully pronounced men inexcusably guilty for not believing upon what he knew to be unsatisfactory, insufficient, and inconclusive evidence. It will be prudent for us to avoid casting such an imputation upon the wisdom or veracity of our Lord. It does not betoken an abundant degree of Christian humility, thus to impeach him in whom dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" but it may rather be regarded as the effect of that "philosophy and vain deceit," which spoileth men. Col. ii. 8, 9. Far more wise, and prudent, and productive of humility and happiness, will it be, to cherish that teachable disposition, which shall induce us to look to our Master for instruction, and to place implicit confidence both in his wisdom and in his veracity.

25. *This cometh to pass.* Namely, their rejection of me, when the proof of my Messiahship is so ample and conclusive. There is nothing in the Greek, answering to this phrase. ¶ *That it might be fulfilled.* Thus are the words of David verified in my case, as well as in his. See note on Matt. ii. 15. It is not probable that the language here quoted was originally uttered as a prophecy of this event; but they are applied to it, by accommodation, according to a usual custom of the Jewish teachers. ¶ *In their law.* Ps. xxxv. 19. The whole of the Old Testament was sometimes denominated *the law*

me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

¶ *They hated me without a cause.* That is, without any proper cause; there was nothing in his character or conduct which deserved hatred. On the contrary it was lovely altogether. He came into the world with a message of grace. He labored unremittingly for the benefit of men. He went about doing good to their souls and their bodies. He healed their bodily diseases, and labored to enlighten their minds and to purify their hearts from sinfulness. He freely laid down his life for them, and promised to raise them to immortal life. Why then should they hate him? Why *did* they hate him? Because their own works were evil and his were righteous. 1 John iii. 12. No other reason can be assigned. His doctrine was disagreeable to them, because it came in collision with their proud, ambitious, and corrupt desires, and condemned their unrighteousness. But this was not a justifiable cause of hatred; for in striving to correct their mistakes and to convert them from sin to holiness, he was in fact, as well as professedly, laboring for their good. They had even no cause for their unbelief, inasmuch as he gave such conclusive evidence of his Messiahship, ver. 22, 24; and to this fact there is special reference here. Their hatred was connected with their unbelief, perhaps in a great measure the occasion of it. But they had sufficient evidence; and there was no good reason why they should disregard it.

26. *Comforter, &c.* See John xiv. 16, 17, 26.

27. *Ye also shall bear witness.* Shall testify; shall proclaim the gospel, and the evidence of its divine authority. They should be assisted to do so, by the spirit of truth speaking in them, ver. 26, and the spirit of power confirming their word with signs following. Mark xvi. 20; Acts ii. 43. ¶ *Because ye have been with me.* By their long and intimate intercourse with him, they had

## CHAPTER XVI.

**T**HESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.

enjoyed the opportunity of receiving his instructions and witnessing his miracles. They were therefore well prepared to bear testimony to the truth of the gospel and the divine mission of its author. See note, end of Matt. xxviii. ¶ *From the beginning.* That is, the beginning of our Lord's ministry. The word rendered beginning, is the same which occurs John i. 1; but whatever its ordinary import may be, it is here clearly limited to the ministry of Jesus; for from the commencement of this only, had the disciples associated with him. Matt. iv. 17—22; ix. 9; x. 1—4; John i. 35—51. See also Acts i. 21, 22.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1. *These things.* Namely, the things recorded in the three preceding chapters. ¶ *That ye should not be offended.* See note on Matt. xi. 6. The meaning is, that you should not be disheartened, discouraged, or in any manner induced to apostatize from the faith and from the ministry to which I have appointed you. He knew that many trials awaited his disciples. To secure them against stumbling and falling, or being *offended*, he held this long and earnest discourse with them, explaining the propriety of his departure, promising them spiritual aid in all their labors, and crowning all by the assurance that in due time he would receive them to himself, and admit them to an endless companionship in the presence of God.

2. *They.* That is, the unbelieving Jews; those who claimed to be the true followers of Moses and teachers of the law: the ecclesiastical rulers; but who believed not on Jesus. ¶ *Shall put you out of the synagogues.* Shall excommunicate you from their religious body, and cut you off from their worshipping assemblies. ¶ *Whosoever killeth you.* This has special reference to the Jews, who, having killed the Master, sought afterwards to slay his followers, that

**3** And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

**4** But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come,

thus they might crush the dangerous heresy. In every case of persecution, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the Jews either were themselves the persecutors, or they stirred up the Gentiles and excited them to violence. For an example, see Acts, ch. vii. ¶ *Will think that he doeth God service.* Will think he is obeying the divine law, and serving God; will think he is doing right, and performing his duty. See Acts xxi. 23—31. Paul declares that, while he was honestly a disciple of the Pharisees, he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and that, when the disciples were put to death, he gave his voice against them. Acts xxvi. 9—11. Such was the spirit of the most honest and sincere adversaries of Christianity. They really believed the disciples were wrong and leading the people astray; and felt that they were performing an acceptable service to God in crushing the heresy by destroying its abettors. As is always the case, others joined in the persecution, and very probably were its prime instigators, who were moved only by the malice of their own hearts, who neither feared God nor regarded man, but only affected great zeal and regard for religion as a cloak for their iniquity and ungodliness. But some were honest and zealous. They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Rom. x. 2. For such persecution Jesus would prepare his disciples; for a persecution carried on in the name of God against his children. And to such persecution have many devoted children of God been subjected, since the days of the apostles. We may be hence admonished, that sincerity of purpose, and zealous devotion to a cause, cannot be taken as positive evidence that the cause itself is just, or that the means used in all honesty for its furtherance are right in the sight of God. They who slew the disciples thought they were doing God service; but it cannot hence be concluded that they were right or righteous in so doing. "It is no evidence of piety, that a man is full of zeal against those whom he

ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you.

**5** But now I go my way to him

supposes to be heretics. And it is one of the best proofs that a man knows nothing of the religion of Jesus, when he is eminent for self-conceit in his own views of orthodoxy, and firmly fixed in the opinion that all who differ from him and his sect *must* of course be wrong." —Barnes.

**3.** *These things, &c.* That is, they will thus excommunicate and persecute you, ver. 2. ¶ *Because, &c.* See note on John xv. 21.

**4.** *These things have I told you.* That is, the trials and persecutions which they must encounter, including perhaps the encouragements narrated in the preceding chapters; the reference seems chiefly, however, to ver. 2, 3. ¶ *Ye may remember, &c.* In the midst of their afflictions, they were to remember that he had predicted such events, and call to mind also the encouragements he had mingled with his predictions. In this manner were they prepared to meet their trials with more fortitude than if they had been encountered unexpectedly. Moreover, their faith in Jesus would be confirmed by this evidence of his prophetic character; and they would have reason to believe the more confidently that, as he had sent them forth, with such an accurate knowledge of what they must endure, he foresaw with equal certainty that the encouragements and assistance of the spirit, which he promised, should be effectual. ¶ *At the beginning.* See John xv. 27. Jesus did not particularly describe these perils, nor the spiritual assistance which his disciples should afterwards experience, at the commencement of his ministry. He gave them early information that theirs should be a life of labor, of strife, of self-denial, requiring an abandonment of all which worldly-minded men hold dear. But he entered not then into particulars. ¶ *Because I was with you.* They needed not this minute instruction, *then*; for in all their difficulties and perplexities, he was near, to counsel and comfort them.

**5.** *Now I go my way, &c.* I am now about to depart from you, ver. 28. **As**

that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that

I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

I shall not be present, to explain every perplexing event which occurs, and to bind up your wounds as heretofore, it is proper that you should now receive these general instructions and encouragements. Thus, knowing what to expect, both of trial and spiritual aid, you may be the better able to possess your souls in patience, run the race before you with fortitude, and endure unto the end. ¶ *None of you asketh, &c.* "In John xiii. 36, Peter had said to him, Lord, whither goest thou? and Thomas much the same in John xiv. 5; both of whom had received an answer. But now, at the time when Jesus was speaking this, none of his apostles asked that question, because their heart was filled with sorrow, ver. 6."—*Pearce*.

6. *Sorrow hath filled your heart.* It would seem from ver. 29, that, at this moment, the disciples did not fully understand what he meant by his departure from them. Yet they did understand that, in some manner, they were to be separated from him for a season, during which they could not approach him as hitherto. John xiii. 36. And they were so entirely overwhelmed with sorrow, notwithstanding his soothing and encouraging address, that they had not energy now to inquire whither he was going, ver. 5.

7. *It is expedient for you, &c.* It is for your good; my departure, though in your imperfect judgment it seems so disastrous, so fatal to all your fond hopes, is in fact for your advantage, and shall result in the full establishment of that cause which you fear it may ruin. One reason he assigned; the Holy Ghost would not be bestowed until he should depart. Another reason is hinted in ver. 10. His resurrection from the dead should be a seal of confirmation that his testimony was true. By their testimony concerning this glorious fact, in connexion with the miraculous power which they should display, they could more effectually persuade men to enter the kingdom of God, than even he

himself had done while on earth. Thus would his death be expedient or advantageous. And in regard to themselves as individuals, his death was expedient. While he remained, all his declarations that he should be put to death did not remove their deeply-rooted prejudices concerning an earthly kingdom and temporal glory, and they were unable to realize that he would die, or to comprehend the spiritual nature of his kingdom. But when he actually died, and rose, and ascended to heaven, then they were prepared to understand his language which they remembered, and to listen to the suggestions of the Holy Spirit concerning his kingdom. And it is a fact, deserving special notice, that they seem evidently to have made greater progress in the knowledge of the truth, in less than three months after his crucifixion, than they had made during their three years' intercourse with him. The prejudice which previously blinded their eyes was removed. They no longer looked upon a bodily Messiah, but regarded him as a spiritual Saviour. See 2 Cor. v. 16, 17. They no longer looked for a temporal kingdom; but fixed their eyes upon that more glorious dominion which the Lord Jesus should exercise, when all intelligent creatures, purified from sin, should bow the knee in his name and confess his authority to the glory of the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11. ¶ *The Comforter.* See John xiv. 16, 26.

8. *He will reprove.* The word here rendered *reprove*, does not necessarily mean to rebuke or admonish. It rather means to convince or to demonstrate the truth by argument or otherwise. Campbell renders it *convince*, so Pearce and others. The world would be reprov'd, to be sure, for its former incredulity, when the evidence of the truth was so plain. Yet I think the full force of the word is sufficiently expressed, when rendered *convince*. ¶ *The world.* All unbelievers, generally; but particularly those who had personally heard and



9 Of sin, because they believe not on me ;

10 Of righteousness, because I

rejected Jesus. See note on John xv. 18. ¶ *Sin, — righteousness, — judgment.* See notes on ver. 9, 10, 11.

9. *Of sin, &c.* In general terms, "sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John iii. 4. In other words, sin consists in doing that which God has forbidden, or in wilfully neglecting to do that which he has commanded,—the intention of the heart being always regarded, rather than the act itself. Matt. v. 21—23; 1 John iii. 15. But a particular sin is here mentioned, and its character distinctly designated; namely, infidelity, or unbelief in him whom God had demonstrated to be his Son, by the wisdom and power he had bestowed upon him. This was the great sin which the apostles charged upon the Jews, and of which they made them sensible, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. By proclaiming and proving the resurrection of Jesus, and by enforcing the evidence of his Messiahship arising both from his words and from his miracles, as well as by the performance of additional miracles in his name, they aroused the slumbering consciences of many Jews, so that they were "pricked in their heart," and were constrained to say, "men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts, ch. ii. They were convinced of their sin, their unbelief which had caused them to shed innocent blood, and about three thousand received baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, as the first fruits of apostolic preaching, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

10. *Of righteousness, &c.* Righteousness may be defined, in general terms, as a conformity to the divine law, the doing of that which God has commanded and abstaining from that which he has forbidden. But, as a particular kind of sin is denoted in the preceding verse, so the righteousness of a particular person is manifestly here intended; namely, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had been denounced by the leading Jews, and the mass of the people had been made to regard him, as an impostor, a sinner, and a blasphemer. Matt. xii. 24; John x. 33. But the world should be convinced of his innocence. And the method by

go to my Father, and ye see me no more ;

11 Of judgment, because the

which it should be done is stated. ¶ *Because I go to my Father.* The resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven afforded a perfect demonstration of his righteousness. The argument is this: had he been an impostor and a blasphemer, as the Jews alleged, God would not have become a party to the imposture, by raising him from the dead, showing him to his disciples, and making them witnesses of his ascension into heaven. As he did thus raise and receive him up from the earth, under such circumstances as to give the disciples perfect knowledge of the fact, he may be considered to have attested or set his seal to the righteousness of his beloved Son. In this light has this subject always been viewed. No man, Jew or Gentile, ever doubted the perfect righteousness of Jesus, after he was convinced, by the testimony of the apostles or otherwise, of his resurrection and ascension. How far that testimony is worthy of reliance, see note end of Matt. xxviii.

11. *Of judgment.* This word sometimes signifies merely a discrimination or determination between good and evil; and sometimes it includes the idea of punishment. It seems to be used in the latter sense here, indicating that God is just, and will render to men according to their works. As in the preceding two verses, so here also, a particular manifestation of justice is referred to. The special *sin* of the unbelieving Jews is indicated in ver. 9; it consisted in rejecting him who exhibited such full proof of his divine mission, and in denouncing him as an impostor and blasphemer, whose righteousness was so clearly demonstrated by his resurrection and visible ascension into heaven, ver. 10. It is reasonable to suppose that the *judgment* here mentioned relates to the same subject, and has special reference to that exemplary retribution rendered to the Jews who persisted in their unbelief and ungodliness. Accordingly, the passage is so interpreted by many commentators. For example: "Concerning judgment: that is, divine judgment, soon to be manifested in the punishment of an incredulous nation, and in defence of the truth."—*Campbell*. Since our Lord so frequently represented

prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you

the terrible calamity about to befall the Jewish nation, to be a signal manifestation of divine justice in the punishment of sin, there can be little doubt that he refers particularly to the same event here; especially as in the previous verses he so manifestly refers to the sin of which that people were guilty in rejecting, reviling, and crucifying him. ¶ *Prince of this world.* Some understand our Lord to apply this appellation to himself; and they suppose him to mean that the Jews should be punished for their unjust condemnation of him. Others understand by the *prince of this world* a personal devil, or Satan, whose condemnation and defeat they suppose to be indicated. Others, with more probability, understand the phrase as a personification of evil, as manifested specially in the Jews, or in the Roman government, or in both. See note on John xii. 31. Thus Livermore: "The prince of this world is judged, or condemned. The conduct of the Jews and Romans, in putting Jesus to death, would be condemned. The severest judgments would descend on Jerusalem. Vast changes were already casting their shadows before them, and soon that religion would be planted upon an immovable basis, which, in its progress and issue, would cast out the prince of this world, the power of evil, and enthroned him to reign, whose right it is to reign, over the hearts and lives of men."

12. *Yet many things, &c.* Jesus had given his disciples a general account or outline of the results which would follow his ministry, death, and resurrection. For the details they were not prepared. They could not *bear* these, until their prejudices concerning a temporal kingdom on earth should be overpowered by his actual death. "Probably he refers here to the great changes which were to take place in the Jewish system; the abolition of sacrifices and the priesthood, the change of the Sabbath, the rejection of the Jewish nation, &c."—*Barnes*. Concerning these and other things, it is manifest that the apostles were not enlightened at once; but

into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he

received accessions of knowledge from time to time, as they became prepared to bear it. Thus Peter could not understand that the division wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, until it was specially revealed to him by the Spirit; and the other apostles were as blind as he, upon this great and important doctrine. See Acts, ch. x., xi.

13. *Spirit of truth.* See notes on John xiv. 16, 17, 26. ¶ *He will guide you into all truth.* He will make known to you those things which you cannot now understand, or bear. My death will prepare you to look for a spiritual kingdom, rather than a temporal. And the spirit shall unfold to your minds, thus relieved from prejudice, all which it is necessary for you to preach and to do, for the full establishment of the gospel committed to your charge. The phrase is of course to be understood as limited by the subject. Our Lord does not mean here that his disciples should become omniscient; but that they should be made acquainted with everything necessary to the accomplishment of their mission. And, moreover, the promise must be regarded as having special reference to those who were selected as the early heralds of the cross. The gift of the Holy Ghost, that infallible inward guide to the truth, is not now enjoyed by disciples; but they are required to judge by the rules of right reason concerning the things which were written under the guidance of that spirit. ¶ *Not speak of himself, &c.* The testimony of the spirit was to be regarded as the testimony of God himself, because it was given under his direction. Having thus personified the spirit of truth, our Lord properly cautioned his disciples that they should not regard its testimony as foreign or different from the direct testimony of God. ¶ *Things to come.* This may mean that the apostles should be enabled by the spirit to foretell future events. But more probably the meaning is that they should be further instructed and prepared by it, concerning events future to the time when this promise was given.

shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me:

14. The testimony it shall give concerning me to you, and through you to the world, shall be honorable to me. It exhibited both the purity of our Lord's character and the glorious nature of his mission. Men were made to see that the Messiah came to deliver them from a bondage more grievous than earthly servitude,—the bondage of sin and death; and to establish a dominion over the hearts of men, more illustrious and more beneficial than earthly sovereignty. ¶ *Shall take of mine, &c.* By comparing ver. 13, 15, the meaning here seems to be this; the spirit shall communicate the truth to you from me; shall impart to you my knowledge of the divine intention. See ver. 15.

15. *All things that the Father hath are mine.* This is not to be understood in an unlimited sense. Jesus did not share with the Father original and supreme control of the universe, 1 Cor. xv. 27. Indeed, throughout this whole discourse he acknowledges the superiority of the Father. John xiv. 23, 31. The manifest reference is to the divine intentions concerning the great work which Jesus had commenced and had commissioned his disciples to carry forward. Such was the subject concerning which the spirit was to speak in his name. He had before intimated that the spirit should reveal the truth from the Father, John xiv. 26; but in ver. 14, he represents that revelation as made from himself. To explain this matter to his disciples, he adds, here, *he shall take of mine*, because what is the Father's is mine. That is, the Father hath so fully communicated to me his intentions on this subject, that what he knows I know; and a revelation of it

and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

18 'They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto

may be indifferently ascribed to either. "He shall receive, and show it unto you: by which the Jew would understand, 'he shall receive of my doctrine' or from my instructions. For the Holy Spirit is sent as an instructor from the Son, as the Son is sent as a Redeemer from the Father."—*Lightfoot.*

16. *A little while and ye shall not see me.* In less than twenty-four hours after these words were uttered, Jesus was placed in the sepulchre, and shut from the sight of his disciples. To this he refers here. ¶ *And again, a little while.* Within three days subsequently. ¶ *Ye shall see me.* I shall arise from the dead, and your eyes shall behold me. ¶ *Because I go to the Father.* It is a part of the divine plan that, when I return to the Father, you shall see me *leave the world*, ver. 28. In this verse, our Lord predicted his death, resurrection, and ascension; yet, as his language was figurative and the minds of the disciples clouded by prejudice, they probably did not clearly understand his meaning until it was more literally explained. See ver. 17, 25—29.

17—19. *What is this, &c.* That is, what is the meaning of this? ¶ *We cannot tell what he saith.* We know not what he means. They heard his words distinctly; but could not understand their meaning. Their great difficulty has frequently been mentioned. They believed he was the Messiah; and they believed also that, being such, he would live forever and reign on the earth. Hence when he mentioned his death and resurrection, they were not prepared to understand him, and could not imagine what he intended figuratively to describe. ¶ *Jesus knew, &c.*

you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remember-

It would seem from ver. 30, that he knew this, not by overhearing their conversation, but by his power of looking into their hearts, John ii. 24, 25. He proceeded to inform them.

20. *I say unto you.* He stated additional particulars connected with his departure from the earth, before he announced it in terms which they confessed to be plain, ver. 28, 29. ¶ *Ye shall weep and lament.* On account of the death of their Master, which they supposed so fatal to all their hopes, the disciples were filled with grief. See Mark xvi. 10; Luke xxiii. 27; xxiv. 17. ¶ *The world shall rejoice.* Namely, unbelievers in general, and particularly the Jews who had hated and persecuted Jesus. See note on John xv. 18. They rejoiced when they had accomplished his death, supposing that they had crushed both him and his cause. ¶ *Shall be turned into joy.* That is, by the resurrection of Jesus. Then the disciples began to understand, that what they had regarded as an irreparable injury was in fact a blessing; inasmuch as the divine mission of their Lord was thus demonstrated, a way opened for the more successful advancement of his cause, life and immortality brought to light, and a firm and unwavering hope implanted of following him in due time to the presence of his Father and dwelling with him forever. It is true, also, in regard to men generally, that events, which, in their ignorance, are regarded as wholly disastrous, are afterwards seen to have been mercifully designed for good; and mourning is thus changed into joy. It is on account of our inability to discern the purpose of God, that any of his dispensations appear hurtful to us. Could we see their design, we should rejoice instead of murmuring. Strong faith will enable us to trust in his goodness, though we may not fully comprehend his purposes.

21. The fact stated in the preceding verse is here illustrated by a very lively

eth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say

figure. The pain of itself is an object of dread, and for a time engrosses the mind to the exclusion of the advantage which may result. But when the blessing is received, it so far outweighs the pain, in the estimation of the individual, that the pain is comparatively forgotten. ¶ *Man.* This indicates, here, a human being without regard to sex.

22. *Ye now therefore have sorrow.* Having illustrated the fact, in ver. 21, our Lord here repeats, that at present his disciples were sorrowful, having regard to the trial which they feared, and that they would soon be even more sorrowful, when his life should be destroyed. ¶ *I will see you again.* Namely, after my resurrection. ¶ *Your heart shall rejoice.* You shall then understand that my death is consistent with my character, and is one link in that great chain of events, which is designed to result in the reconciliation of the world to God. And, understanding this, your heart shall rejoice, and your sorrow be forgotten. ¶ *Your joy no man taketh, &c.* None can deprive you of your joy. The evidence of my resurrection and ascension shall be so full and satisfactory, that none shall ever be able to shake your faith or cause you to entertain even a doubt that I am the true Messiah. This promise was fulfilled. From the moment when they saw him ascend from the earth, we find not the slightest trace of doubt in their minds. But, in the midst of trials and persecutions, they steadfastly believed in Jesus, and rejoiced in that hope which was an anchor to their souls.

23. *In that day.* That is, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus; the time indicated in ver. 22, when the disciples should rejoice. ¶ *Shall ask me nothing.* Hitherto they had been accustomed to make their requests directly to Jesus for such things as they needed, whether instruction or aught else. But they are here admonished

unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be

that it would be improper as well as impracticable to do so, after he should depart from them into heaven. They could no longer hold familiar intercourse with him, as formerly ; and it was proper to address prayer to another, as he had frequently given them an example. Henceforward, they were to *ask the Father*, in the name of Jesus, or as his disciples, for such blessings as they might need. Jesus had always professed his dependence on the Father, and invoked his aid and blessing. And he would have his disciples do likewise,—acknowledging him, at the same time, as the author of their faith and their spiritual deliverer and Master, by offering their prayers in his name. ¶ *Whatsoever ye shall ask*, &c. See note on John xiv. 13.

24. *Hitherto*. From the commencement of his ministry ; during the whole time that they had associated with him. ¶ *Ye have asked*, &c. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God, Matt. vi. 9—13. But while he remained with them, he did not require them to pray in his name. He now assures them that, although he should be absent, they might expect from him the same ready attention to their wants and the same sympathy as before. They should ask blessings in his name, and feel just as sure of their bestowment, as if he were present, heard their requests, and offered them to God. By praying in his name, they would be perpetually reminded of his kindness and benevolence, would strengthen their own confidence in him, and would acknowledge before God their obligations to him. ¶ *Ask*, &c. That is, ask the Father in my name, and the blessings you need shall be bestowed. ¶ *That your joy may be full*. See note on John xv. 11. Their joy should be completed by the enlightening and sustaining influence of the spirit which should be bestowed, and by the blessings granted by the Father in answer to their prayers. Some suppose particular reference is made to the miraculous powers which should be given to

full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs : but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

the apostles, and which should be to them a perpetual testimony that their trust in God and in his Son Jesus Christ was well founded. Having such trust, founded upon such evidence, they could not be disturbed by doubts or fears, but would rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 1 Pet. i. 8.

25. *In proverbs*. Rather, in figurative language. Even in this last discourse to his disciples, Jesus conveyed much instruction in figurative terms, which they were not able *then* to comprehend, though its meaning afterwards became obvious. “It is worthy of remark, that though his declarations in these chapters, about his death and resurrection, appear to us to be plain, yet to the apostles, filled with Jewish prejudices and unwilling to believe that he was about to die, they would appear exceedingly obscure and perplexed. The plainest declarations to them on this subject would appear to be involved in mystery.”—*Barnes*. We have an instance of this kind, in the fact that immediately after he had declared plainly, “The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and after that he is killed, he shall rise again the third day,” his disciples commenced disputing which should be greatest in his kingdom ; evidently not expecting he would die, but looking for his reign on the earth. Mark ix. 31—34. Compare Luke ix. 44—46 ; and see note on Matt. xviii. 1. Most of his language on this subject, however, was truly figurative, the exact import of which could not be distinctly perceived, until after the events occurred. Yet the language itself was remembered, perhaps with more vividness for that very reason ; and, when understood, it served to confirm the faith of the disciples. See John ii. 22. ¶ *The time cometh*, &c. That is, after my ascension. ¶ *Shew you plainly*, &c. By the agency of the spirit, ver. 13, you shall be made to comprehend distinctly the Father’s design in my mission, death, and resurrection.

26, 27. *I say not — that I will pray*,

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you :

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him,

&c. Jesus had before assured them that they should continue, after his departure, to enjoy the benefit of his love and his prayers, John xiv. 16; and the apostle to the Hebrews represents him as continually making intercession for us, Heb. vii. 25. Hence we cannot understand him to mean, here, that he will not pray. The meaning seems to be this:—Ask confidently in my name: for, aside from any consideration of the effect of my prayers, the Father himself loves you, not only with that benevolent affection with which he regards the most sinful of his children, but with an approving love on account of your love towards me and your faith in me as his Messenger. Hence he is always ready to bless you. See notes on John xiv. 21, 23. Should it be said, the prayers of Jesus are useless, if the love of God is so strong that he would bestow the blessings without intercession; I reply, men are exhorted to pray, for the very reason that they believe God is ready to bestow the blessing. 1 Tim. ii. 1—6. And it is certainly more consistent with a spirit of reconciliation to God and approval of his will, to ask those blessings which we believe he will bestow, than to be urgent for such as we do not believe consistent with his designs. There is no absurdity, therefore, but rather the utmost propriety, in believing that the Son asks for precisely those blessings which the love of the Father prompts him to grant.

23. *I came forth, &c.* In this verse, I understand our Lord distinctly to assert his preëxistence; when he *came into the world*, he *came forth from the Father*. See John iii. 13, 17; vi. 62; xvii. 5. By returning to his Father, he obviously means that he should leave the world, and depart from his disciples, in

Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own,

such a sense that, notwithstanding they should enjoy the influences of his spirit, they could not consider themselves present with him until he should come and *receive them to himself*. See note on John xiv. 2, 3. His language here more distinctly indicated his departure from the earth, by death or otherwise, than any which he had previously used in this discourse; and it was so regarded by the disciples, ver. 29. The meaning may be expressed thus; I came from heaven, the place where the divine presence is peculiarly manifested, into this world, or to the earth; again, I depart from the earth and return to heaven.

29. *Now speakest thou plainly*. What had chiefly perplexed the disciples was his declaration in ver. 16; compare ver. 17—19. This he had now explained, and they professed themselves satisfied.

30. *Now are we sure, &c.* It is generally supposed that the circumstance, which produced this conviction in their minds, was the reply of Jesus to their *thoughts* which they had not communicated to him, ver. 16—19. Connecting this perfect knowledge of the secret thoughts of their hearts with all the other manifestations they had witnessed of his wisdom and power, they were fully convinced; and they professed, in the most unlimited and positive terms, their faith that he came from God, or that he was the true Messiah.

31. *Do ye now believe?* This question was proposed, to prepare them for the annunciation that their faith was not so firm as they imagined. They still had prejudices to be removed; prejudices so strong as to shake their faith, however confident they were that it was firm.

32. *The hour cometh, &c.* Namely, the time of his crucifixion, on the suc-

and shall leave me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have

ceeding day. ¶ *Ye shall be scattered, &c.* Accordingly we read that "all the disciples forsook him and fled." Matt. xxvi. 56. See the note. ¶ *Leave me alone.* Leave me to endure that trial which has always caused me to shudder, without your sympathy. Not one of the apostles, except John, seems to have had sufficient fortitude and courage to witness the crucifixion. To the bodily anguish of that terrible death was added the painful conviction that all his instructions were so imperfectly understood by his most intimate associates, that their faith in him was crushed, and they had forsaken him in his hour of utmost need. He was left to the cruelty of his enemies, no friend lifting a hand on his behalf, and none but the wretched Judas even making a protestation of his innocence. ¶ *Yet I am not alone, &c.* Jesus knew he had one Friend who would never leave nor forsake him. He knew that the Father had sent him into the world to perform his will ; and that he had faithfully executed his mission. He knew that the Father loved him. And though his return to the Father's presence must be through the grave, and though the passage to the grave was painful and dreadful, yet he knew the Father would sustain him, and grant his presence during his most bitter agony. And when the hour came, he prayed to the Father on behalf of others, and commended to him his own spirit. Luke xxiii. 34, 46.

33. *These things, &c.* Jesus closed his address by again reminding his disciples that it was designed to console them and give them peace ; to confirm their faith in him, when the events foretold should have been accomplished ; and to give them a spirit of confidence in him as their guide to truth, and holiness, and glory. ¶ *Ye shall have tribulation.* You will not only suffer when I die, but be exposed to opposition and persecution during life. ¶ *Be of good cheer.* Be not disheartened ; confide in me ; be faithful ; and you shall triumph. ¶ *I have overcome the world.* "That is, I have gotten the better hitherto of

tribulation, but be of good cheer : I have overcome the world.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**T**HESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven,

all opposition from enemies, and shall soon get the better of their last effort, my death ; and my thus overcoming the world is a motive for your being of good cheer under the tribulation which ye also will meet with."—*Pearce*. "This I have foretold you, that you may depend on me for all kind of prosperity ; and, by consideration of my conquest of all that is formidable in the world, take courage, and hold out against all the terrors and threats of the world and the sufferings in it."—*Hammond*. To the same effect, Rosenmüller and others.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1. *These words.* Namely, the words which are recorded in the preceding chapters. Our Lord knew that the time of his departure was at hand ; and he prepared his disciples to meet both this trial and all which should succeed it, by assuring them that God would approve their faithfulness, grant them the aid of his spirit to guide and sustain them, and finally receive them to himself in heaven. Having thus consoled and encouraged them, and directed their attention to his own struggle with the power of evil and triumph over it, as a fit example for imitation, he closed the interview by commending them to their heavenly Father. It is to be observed, however, that his prayer was not on behalf of these disciples alone ; he prayed first for himself, ver. 1—5 ; then for his disciples, ver. 6—19 ; then for those who should become disciples *through their word*, or by believing their testimony, ver. 20—23 ; and then, his benevolent affections bursting over all limits, in ver. 23 he embraced the *world* in his petition, in anticipation of that blessed period when the good pleasure of the Father which he purposed in himself should be fully accomplished in the gathering together in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth. Eph. i. 9, 10. Such is the comprehensive character of this prayer ; and it is consistent with the spirit of him who came to seek and save the lost, to

and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee :

be the Saviour of the world, and to be the representative, the visible manifestation, of Him who is good unto all and whose tender mercies are over all his works. Ps. cxlv. 9 ; Luke xix. 10, Heb. i. 3 ; 1 John iv. 14. ¶ *Lifted up his eyes.* See note on John xi. 41. ¶ *The hour is come.* Namely, the hour when my earthly ministry is to close, and when I shall depart from my disciples and return to thee. John xvi. 28. ¶ *Glorify thy Son.* Honor thy Son. So sustain me by thy grace, in the approaching trial, that I may complete the demonstration of my Sonship by a faithful adherence to duty ; and, by raising me from the dead and publicly receiving me up from the earth, give to the world undeniable and irresistible evidence that I am truly thy Son. ¶ *That thy Son also may glorify thee.* The import of this petition seems to be, that the Messiahship of Jesus might be so fully demonstrated that his gospel should be permanently established and universally promulgated, to the honor of God among men. The gospel so reveals the divine character, as to constrain believers to honor God, to reverence, love, and adore him. The honor of both Father and Son therefore was concerned in the granting of this petition. By being convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah, the world would honor him ; and, honoring him, would believe his testimony, and thus be led to honor the Father.

2. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh.* See Matt. xxviii. 18. This phrase is unlimited both in form and spirit, so far as it relates to the number of mankind subjected to the power of Jesus ; and the amount of power is limited only by the necessity of the case. The power was not supreme, for such was not needed ; but it cannot be doubted that it was *sufficient* for the purpose designed. John iii. 34. The strict universality of the dominion is indicated not alone by the general phrase *all flesh*, which is comprehensive but sometimes limited in its import. From the nature of the case, it must be regarded as universal. God is the common Father of all, and may not be expected to exclude any from the

2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast*

benefit of the Messiah's reign ; it is expressly asserted by Jesus himself, that he was sent by the Father to save the world ; and the apostles declared, that he was sent to be the Saviour of the world, and that he gave himself a ransom for all and tasted death for every man. Moreover, when Paul described this subjection of all flesh to the power of Jesus, he used very strong and comprehensive terms ; and lest he should be misunderstood, he added that God himself was not to be understood as included among those who were thus subjected. 1 Cor. xv. 27. When he thus made an exception which was *manifest*, most certainly he would have also excepted a portion of mankind, which was *not manifest*, if he believed such exception should be made, and intended to state the matter of fact truly. ¶ *That he should give, &c.* That is, this power was bestowed, in order that he might give, or to enable him to give, the blessing designed and here mentioned. He was fully qualified and empowered for the work assigned him. Hence its completion might be expected. And Jesus prayed that as he had faithfully used this power, thus far, ver. 4, he might be sustained to the last, ver. 1. ¶ *Eternal life.* This phrase often indicates that spiritual life, and peace, and joy, which men attain on the earth, through faith in Jesus Christ. John v. 24. In this place it seems to have a wider signification, and to denote that state of life which results from an *entire* deliverance from the power of sin. This was the great and crowning work committed to Jesus ; to save his people from their sins, to redeem men from all iniquity, and to take away the sin of the world, Matt. i. 21 ; John i. 29 ; Tit. ii. 14. In this manner, should all opposition to God and to holiness be overcome ; the power of evil be utterly demolished ; and the whole human family brought to the home of their Father, confessing his authority, extolling his mercy, and rejoicing in his presence. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28 ; Eph. i. 9, 10 ; Phil. ii. 9—11. Such was the most valuable blessing he was commissioned to bestow ; and to this he seems here to refer. Other blessings were incidental



given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only

to his ministry; faith in him admits us to a foretaste of the heavenly life and blessedness; but the full fruition of the good designed by the Father, in sending the Son to be the Saviour of the world, can only be realized, when the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, through the power of the resurrection. Luke xx. 36; John iii. 17; xii. 47; Rom. viii. 21. Or, if it be supposed that the primary reference here is to the life which believers enjoy in this world, it must nevertheless be remembered, that this is similar in nature, though inferior in degree, to that which shall be the portion of saints made perfect in heaven. And whether bestowed here or hereafter, it results from faith or knowledge of the divine character. And as power was given to Jesus to bestow it, we need not have the slightest doubt that he will do so; for he has given the most convincing evidence of his love to mankind and desire for their welfare, by giving his life for us while we were yet sinners. John xv. 13; Rom. v. 6—8. ¶ *To as many as thou hast given him.* Namely, to *all flesh*, over whom he has power; in other words, to mankind without exception. See note on Matt. i. 21. In ver. 6—12, Jesus speaks of them who were given him for a particular purpose, or in a peculiar sense. But here he manifestly speaks of all; else why refer to his power over all? Surely, power over the whole human race was not necessary, to enable him to give eternal life to the few who had at *that time* believed on him. If we limit the meaning of the phrase here by its import in ver. 6—12, we must understand Jesus to speak only of them who were *then* his disciples; for he speaks of none other there. If we do not thus strictly limit it, no good reason can be assigned for any limitation whatever; on the contrary, the character of God and of his Son, the object for which the Son was sent into the world, and his own language in this verse, all require us to understand him to refer to all men, in the most unlimited sense.

3. *This is life eternal*, &c. "This is the source of eternal life; or it is in

true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the

this manner that it is to be obtained. The knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ *is itself* a source of unspeakable and eternal joy."—*Barnes*. The enjoyment of spiritual life and salvation from sin, either here or hereafter, the sacred writers often represent as closely connected with a knowledge of God, and his Son, and his truth. John v. 44; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Heb. viii. 10—12. If the faint conceptions here attained by men of the divine character and purposes be productive of life, much more that full knowledge which God will impart, when he shall have freed us from the imperfections and impediments of the flesh, and clothed us in spiritual bodies in his kingdom. ¶ *That they might know thee*, &c. Of course, more than a mere theoretical, speculative knowledge is here intended. It is a faith or knowledge which works by love and purifies the heart, that alone can yield spiritual life. It is implied that God be revered, obeyed, and loved. The sense in which the evangelist uses the word *know*, when describing men's knowledge of God, may be seen in 1 John ii. 3, 4; iv. 6—8. ¶ *The only true God*. In opposition to heathen deities, idols, and all that is called God. The divine unity was taught in the Old Testament; and was fully recognized and enforced by our Lord. Isa. xlv. 5—7, 21—25; Mark xii. 29, 30. ¶ *Jesus Christ*. See notes on Matt. i. 1, 21. Some have supposed these words were interpolated, inasmuch as our Lord nowhere else gives himself this appellation; but there seems to be no sufficient authority to reject them. It is observable, that our Lord here, as elsewhere, acknowledges the superiority of the Father, and instead of claiming to be himself the true God, confesses another as such, and himself as a messenger sent by the *only true God*.

4. *I have glorified thee*, &c. Namely, by revealing the divine character and illustrating it by a perfect example; by proclaiming the gospel, in which the benevolent purposes of God are made known to men; by a life of obedience, thus leading men to purity and godliness, by the force of example, as well as by precept; by giving his life for the

earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with

world, that the world might be saved; and by these and other means, inspiring confidence and reverence in the hearts of men towards God, and inducing them to glorify him by walking in his statutes, and praising him for his mercies, and confiding in his love. See also note on ver. 1. ¶ *I have finished the work*, &c. The same declaration, in substance, was repeated on the cross, John xix. 30. Our Lord probably included here his final act of obedience before his exaltation. All the preparations for his death were made; he knew it was at hand; and he had resolved to be obedient in this last and severest duty assigned him. Including this, he had finished the work given him to do on the earth. But it is not to be understood that the full effect of his labor had then been realized or fully accomplished; nor that he would thenceforth relax his labors for the reconciliation of men to God. He still operates by his spirit; he still reigns in his spiritual kingdom, and will reign, until sin be destroyed, and all yield a cheerful homage to him and to the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Phil. ii. 8—11; Heb. ii. 7—15. He had put in operation that system of means which he knew would result in the salvation of the world, in the broadest sense of the phrase; for nothing short of this could be considered a *completion* or the *finishing* of the work committed to him. Matt. i. 21; Luke ii. 10—14; John iii. 17; 1 John iv. 14.

5. *Glorify thou me*. See ver. 1. ¶ *With thine own self*. That is, in heaven; or the place where the divine presence is peculiarly manifested. See John xvi. 23, and note on xiv. 2, 3. ¶ *With the glory*. With the honor; including, of course, the happiness and all other privileges and enjoyments belonging to that state. ¶ *Which I had with thee before*, &c. I know not how the preëxistence of our Lord could be more forcibly asserted, nor how this passage can be explained consistently with his simple humanity. Taken in connexion with John xvi. 23, this passage seems to afford conclusive proof that Jesus came forth from the Father,

the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me

from a state of glory, when he came into this world; and as he was about to leave the world, he prays that he might be reinstated in his former glory, in the presence of the Father. I have seen no interpretation, according to the opposite theory, which does not appear strained and forced. A reinstatement in his former glory does not imply, however, that no additional honor was bestowed on him; but the contrary seems asserted in Phil. ii. 8, 9; Heb. xii. 2. See also Acts ii. 33—36; v. 30, 31. It is by no means unreasonable, nor inconsistent with the spirit of the divine administration, to suppose that Jesus was crowned with additional honor, in consequence of his faithful and perfect execution of the divine will, in taking away the sin of the world. John i. 29.

6. *I have manifested thy name*. The word *name* seems here to be put for the individual, and the sense to be, I have manifested thee. Jesus had made known to his disciples the character, law, and purpose of God; or, more briefly, he had revealed God. See note on Matt. vi. 9. ¶ *Men which thou gavest me out of the world*. The reference is here to those who had then believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; perhaps especially to the apostles. These were given to him for a particular purpose,—that they should be instructed by him, and bear witness of him after his return unto the Father. They were chosen servants for the propagation of the gospel through the world. In this sense, they were separated from the world and given to him. In a more general sense all are given to him, ver. 2; and to this there appears to be an allusion in ver. 10; but these were specially given, inasmuch as a special object was thereby to be accomplished. See note on Matt. xx. 16. For similar cases, see Gal. vi. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 10; v. 8; 2 Tim. iv. 13. ¶ *Thine they were*, &c. All men are God's, by creation, for he created all of one blood; by providence, for he supplies the wants of all, is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; and by grace, for he will have all men to be enlightened and saved, and he sent his Son to accomplish that

out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee:

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out

glorious purpose. Acts xvii. 26; Ps. cxlv. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 1 John iv. 14. ¶ *Have kept thy word.* Have not only heard, but believed, thy word according to my testimony. They were neither way-side nor stony-ground hearers; but they received the word into honest hearts, and it became fruitful. Matt. xiii. 19—23.

7. *They have known.* They have been informed and convinced by my instructions. ¶ *That all things, &c.* The reference here is probably both to the doctrines delivered by Jesus, and to the wisdom and power by which he was qualified for his mission. All these he uniformly ascribed to his Father as the giver. The meaning is, they are convinced that I am a messenger from thee, acting and speaking by thine authority.

8. *The words.* The doctrines. I have instructed them according to thy directions. The result is here stated more fully than in ver. 7, but to the same effect; namely, that the disciples received and acknowledged him as a teacher sent from God. ¶ *Came out from thee.* That I was not merely constituted a teacher, like the prophets, but that I came from thee, having previously existed in thy presence.

9. *I pray for them.* That is, for the disciples who *then* believed, and of whom he had hitherto particularly spoken; for them who had already received and kept the word of God, and embraced Jesus as his Son. ¶ *I pray not for the world.* That is, the portion of his petition which he was then offering related, not to unbelievers and the world generally, here denominated the world, but to his disciples only. In subsequent portions of the same petition, supplications are offered for other believers, ver. 20, and for the world, ver. 21. That the gracious Redeemer did not refuse to pray for the world, for the salvation of which he was sent, is so

from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in

evident, that commentators generally admit the fact, whatever opinion they may entertain concerning the salvation of the world. Their testimony is well represented in the following note: "This passage settles nothing about the question whether Christ prayed for sinners. He *now* prayed for his disciples, who were not those who hated him and disregarded his favors. He afterwards extended the prayer for all who should become Christians, ver. 20. When on the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers and murderers. Luke xxiii. 34."—*Barnes*. Again—"This very prayer for them is made for the sake of the world, and with respect to their saving faith; that is, for them who should believe through his word, ver. 20, that the world might believe and know that the Father had sent him, ver. 23; so that he prayed for his *apostles*, for this very end, that the *world* by their means might believe, and believing might have life through his name. It is therefore plain he made this prayer, in which he said *I pray not for the world*, out of affection to the world, and with this design, that the preaching of the apostles to them might be more effectual for their conversion and salvation."—*Whitby*.

10. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine.* There seems here a more general allusion to the community of interest in mankind, of the Father and Son. All souls belong to God, and he appointed his Son ruler of all. Yet those who confess the dominion of Jesus are specially styled *mine* by him. ¶ *I am glorified in them.* They honor me, by receiving my testimony and obeying my word. He proceeds to pray that they may continue to honor him, by the purity of their lives, and by witnessing a good profession of their faith; so that the world might in due time be convinced that he came from God, might embrace the truth, attain deliverance

the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

from sin, and unite in obeying, worshipping and enjoying God.

11. *No more in the world.* Having completed my earthly ministry, I am about to depart from the world and return to thee. ¶ *But these are in the world.* My disciples have not yet accomplished their ministry; they will remain; but they will not enjoy my personal companionship and advice. As they were thus to be left as sheep among wolves, their master prayed that they might continue to be protected as carefully as if he were present, perpetually watching over them. ¶ *Keep, &c.* "When the connection in this prayer is considered with any degree of attention, we must be sensible that the words *the name of God*, in ver. 6, 11, 12, and 26, denote the same thing. If, then, by the *name of God*, ver. 6 and 26, he meant the great foundations of the Christian institution, the being preserved or kept in it, ver. 11 and 12, must mean their being enabled to continue in the faith and practice of that religion."—*Campbell*. So *Barnes*, and others. ¶ *That they may be one, &c.* That they may be united in love, harmony, community of desire and interest; that they may have a common affection for mankind, and unitedly labor for the salvation of the world. The oneness here indicated is similar to that mentioned in John x. 30.

12. *While I was, &c.* So long as I have been or shall be personally present with them. ¶ *Kept them, &c.* See note on ver. 11. ¶ *Those that thou gavest me.* Namely, as apostles, and primitive believers. See notes on ver. 2, 6, 9. ¶ *I have kept.* I have preserved them in the faith and practice of the gospel. ¶ *None of them is lost but the son of perdition.* As being kept indicates preservation in the faith and practice of the religion inculcated by Jesus, so being lost indicates its opposite; namely, apostasy, or a falling away from that faith and practice. Such was the condition of Judas, to whom reference is here undoubtedly made. He had already apostatized, and had

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

betrayed his Master; he was now approaching, with a band of soldiers, to consummate his treachery. A resemblance in the original terms, *ἀποδίο*, (*ἀπώλετο*), is lost, and *ἀπολείας*, (*ἀπωλείας*), perdition, or loss, is not preserved in the common translation. The idea would be more obvious by preserving the similarity of words; it may be expressed in either of the following forms: none of them is lost, but the son of loss, or the lost one; none of them is destroyed, but the son of destruction; or, taking the words according to their figurative import, none of them has apostatized, but the son of apostasy, or the apostate. The son of any person or thing, in the Hebrew idiom, has a great variety of import. See note on Matt. i. 1; see also *Stuart's Letters to Miller*, quoted in *Whittemore's Notes on the Parables*, p. 97, note. According to that idiom, *son of apostasy* means an apostate. And that such is the meaning here, seems evident from the corresponding figurative use of the word *keep* in this verse and the preceding. All the disciples had been kept in the faith except one; Judas, the apostate, had not been preserved, but had apostatized. There is not the slightest reference here to the future condition of that wretched individual: his present state only is denoted. For some general remarks concerning Judas, see note on Matt. xxvi. 24. I only add, that though Judas was lost, whatever be the meaning of the term, his case is not hopeless; for Jesus came to seek and save the lost. See Matt. xviii. 11, and Luke xix. 10, where the same original word is found. ¶ *That the scripture, &c.* See note on John xiii. 18. It may be difficult to determine whether this phrase is here to be understood in its frequent sense, as indicating that the apostasy of Judas was aptly described by the prophet. Ps. xli. 9; or in its strict sense, indicating that it had been prophesied of the Messiah that he should be betrayed. As matter of fact, however, since Jesus was delivered to be crucified and slain, according to the determinate counsel and

**13** And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

**14** I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

foreknowledge of God, Acts ii. 23, there can be no doubt that the means by which he was delivered were equally certain and known. I would not say that any power was exerted on Judas, to make him a traitor; but he was placed within the reach of those influences and circumstances which were certain to incline him to such apostasy, unless prevented by the restraining grace of God. It suited the purpose of God to withhold such restraint; and Judas fell, as it was known he would fall.

**13. Now come I to thee.** See note on John xvi. 23. ¶ *My joy fulfilled in themselves.* Or, "That their joy in me may be complete."—*Campbell*. The meaning is similar to John xvi. 33. Their faith would be confirmed by the fulfilment of his predictions, as well as by his resurrection; and they would rejoice with joy unspeakable in the belief that he had returned to the Father, whither they should follow him; and that, in the mean time, they should be under the divine protection and guidance.

**14. I have given, &c.** See note on ver. 8. ¶ *The world hath hated them, &c.* See notes on John xv. 18—21.

**15. That thou shouldest take, &c.** Jesus did not pray that his disciples might then die, which is the meaning of this phrase; for although a life of toil and suffering awaited them, they had an important ministry to fulfil. He was willing they should suffer in such a cause; he had chosen them for this very purpose. He had not spared his own tears, and agony; he offered his own life also. And he was willing his disciples should tread in his steps; so that not only themselves might be made perfect through suffering, but the great work which he had commenced might be carried forward until the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. No disciple should be impatient for a discharge from his duty; as long as God has a work for him

**15** I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

**16** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

**17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

to perform, he should labor diligently and cheerfully, even though painfully. ¶ *Shouldest keep them from the evil.* That is, that they should be preserved from the moral evil prevalent in the world. We can hardly suppose he supplicated for their exemption from trials, and persecutions, and bodily sufferings, which are generally accounted evil; such a prayer could not have been offered in faith, and it certainly was not granted; but the Father heard the Son in all the petitions which he did offer. John xi. 42. It is probable that the recent defection and apostasy of Judas, ver. 12, suggested this form of request; and our Lord prayed, especially, that his disciples might be preserved from a like downfall; and, generally, that they might be sustained against all temptation, and remain faithful ministers of the New Testament both in word and in deed.

**16.** See note on John xv. 19. Because they were not of the world, they would be hated and persecuted by the world; this would operate as a temptation to conceal or renounce their faith. Hence it was that their Master prayed that they might be preserved from falling.

**17. Sanctify them.** To sanctify signifies to make holy; it also signifies to consecrate to a holy use. In this place it may be understood in either sense, or both. Jesus prayed that his disciples might be made more and more holy; and that they might be consecrated to the holy work of proclaiming his gospel and illustrating its spirit by their virtues. ¶ *Through thy truth.* The truth of God, or the gospel of his Son, which reveals his true character and purposes, is uniformly represented as of a purifying, cleansing nature. Thus it is frequently connected with the deliverance of men from the deadly bondage of sin into spiritual life. John iii. 16—21; v. 24; Acts xv. 9; Gal. i. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 4. A knowledge of God's goodness

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone ; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word :

leads men to repentance, Rom. ii. 4 ; a sense of his justice induces them to obey his commandments ; a perception of his love constrains them to love him and to love each other, and thus to fulfil both the great commandments. Matt. xxii. 37—40 ; Rom. xiii. 8—10 ; 1 John iv. 10, 11, 18—21. ¶ *Thy word is truth.* All the communications of God to men are true. Special reference is here had to the message delivered by Jesus himself, ver. 8 ; but the Old Testament may be included, as he recognized its divine authority ; and the New Testament also, being written under the guidance of his spirit.

18. *As thou hast sent, &c.* For the accomplishment of the same great work which was committed to himself, Jesus commissioned his disciples ; namely, to preach the gospel of the grace of God, that men might hear, believe, and be saved.

19. *For their sakes.* To inspire and confirm their faith in me as the Messiah ; to encourage them by my example ; to give them confidence in the final success of their mission. *Sanctify myself.* If the word sanctify here have its signification of making holy, it must be limited by the necessity of the case, and the phrase be understood to denote, I keep myself holy, or I remain holy ; for as Jesus was never unholy, he could not, in any proper sense, make himself holy. But perhaps it has rather the sense of consecration. In this sense, it may be truly said that Jesus sanctified or consecrated himself wholly to his work. It was his meat to do his Father's will, and finish his work, John iv. 34. No other object was permitted to come into competition with this. No flatteries could allure or dangers affright him from the path of duty. He went steadily forward, until he encountered the death which he distinctly saw from the beginning would be the end of a career of faithfulness. ¶ *That they also, &c.* That they might be fully conse-

21 That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one ;

crated to their ministry by my precepts and example, by the force and spirit of the truth I have communicated ; and that their own hearts also might be purified by the truth. See note on ver. 17.

20. *Neither pray I for these alone.* Though I have hitherto spoken only of my apostles and other disciples who have already believed, I do not confine my prayer to them. Jesus was not so partial in his affectionate desires. He came into the world to save sinners, and would not cast off or overlook the most bigoted and hardened. Luke xxiii. 34 ; 1 Tim. i. 15. ¶ *But for them also, &c.* That is, for such as should believe in consequence of the faithful testimony of his apostles. This includes all believers, in all ages ; but it seems to refer specially to early converts, as a more comprehensive petition immediately follows.

21. *That they all may be one, &c.* See note on ver. 11. ¶ *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Here the spirit of benevolence, which moved and animated him always, is manifested in its full expansion. The welfare of the whole world is here besought of the Father ; and to this point all the preceding petitions tended. It was for this, that he sanctified himself ; and it was for this, that he desired his disciples might be preserved faithful. See Whithy, quoted in note on ver. 9. When all should acknowledge that Jesus was sent of God, in his own image, to reveal his will, then all would become partakers of life. And though we see not yet the full accomplishment of the blessing, we see so much, that we need not doubt the result. Heb. ii. 8, 9.

22. *And the glory, &c.* "The honor which thou hast conferred on me by admitting me to union with thyself, the same honor I have conferred on them by admitting them to like union with me."—Barnes. Pearce understands the *glory* to refer to the miraculous

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me be-

power which Jesus received of the Father, and which he communicated to his disciples. So Whitby, and others. Perhaps it may be more correct, to understand the word in a more general sense, thus: As thou hast honored me, by appointing me an accredited messenger of thy grace to mankind, I have bestowed a similar honor on them, by appointing them to proclaim the same grace, as my substitutes. The apostles esteemed it a high honor and privilege, that they were selected both to labor and suffer in the cause of Christ, for the good of mankind. Acts v. 41; 2 Cor. v. 18—20; 1 Tim. i. 12. See note on Matt. xix. 23. ¶ *That they may be one, &c.* See note on ver. 11. Thus repeatedly did our Saviour pray that his disciples might cherish a spirit of harmony and union; which, indeed, was but praying that they might cherish the true spirit of his gospel, and illustrate it in their conduct. That spirit is love: where it prevails, there will be union; and its existence, manifested in union, and harmony, and deeds of kindness and benevolence, is proposed by our Lord, as a test of discipleship. John xiii. 35. See also 1 John iv. 7—14.

23. *Perfect in one.* That is, that they may be wholly united in affection; that their union may be complete with each other, and also with the Father and the Son, by the influence of the same spirit of love. See 1 John i. 3. ¶ *That the world, &c.* That it may be manifest to all men, that the testimony of Jesus concerning the universality of the divine love was true, and felt to be true by his disciples.

24. *I will.* I desire. This word is often used in the sense of commanding, when addressed by superiors to inferiors; but when used as here, it can only be understood to express an ardent, earnest desire. ¶ *Where I am.* That is, wherever I may be. We cannot in-

fore the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

interpret the phrase strictly; for we should thus be constrained to confine the reference to the very place which our Lord occupied when he uttered this prayer, which would be manifestly absurd. But the same rule which permits us to extend its signification to any other place, subsequently occupied by him, equally permits its extension to all places in the universe, thus occupied. The sense evidently is this: I desire the companionship of my disciples, wherever I may be. The subsequent words show that he desired their presence with him, not only on earth, but in heaven; so that his prayer in effect was, that they might be admitted to share with him the enjoyment of the divine presence, in that place to which he was about to depart. ¶ *Behold my glory.* See note on ver. 5. ¶ *Thou lovedst me, &c.* This is an additional testimony of our Lord's preëxistence. Some have supposed that no more is intended than that God loved him by anticipation, so to speak, as he loves men before they are born; see Rom. ix. 11—13. But when the passage is taken in connexion with ver. 5, and similar testimonies, this interpretation appears unnatural and forced. The plainer meaning should be regarded as the true one.

25. *Hath not known thee, &c.* See note on ver. 3. The world was *then* ignorant of the truth; but should subsequently become enlightened. See note on ver. 21, 23.

26. *Declared unto them thy name.* I have made known to these chosen disciples thy character and purposes. See note on ver. 6. ¶ *And will declare it.* I will more fully instruct them by my resurrection, ascension, and the influence of my spirit. ¶ *I in them.* That is, by the power of my doctrine and spirit. That they may continually feel my spiritual presence, until I shall receive them to myself. John xiv. 3.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**W**HEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the

Thus ends this prayer; incomparably tender, affectionate, consolatory, and at the same time instructive. It clearly manifests the perpetuity of our Lord's love, John xiii. 1. As the Father always heard and answered the Son, we may confidently and joyfully believe that this petition was effectual. John xi. 42.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *Went forth.* Having completed his final address of instruction and encouragement to his disciples, Jesus went forth with them to the place where he knew he should meet his betrayer. ¶ *Over the brook Cedron.* This brook, otherwise called Kidron, was on the easterly border of Jerusalem, flowing through the valley between the city and the mount of Olives. Jesus had been in Jerusalem during the evening; and now, late at night, he left the city, passed over the brook, and entered the garden which was on the western declivity of the mount of Olives. ¶ *A garden.* Called Gethsemane. Matt. xxvi. 36.

2. *Jesus oft-times resorted thither.* This mount was a favorite resort of Jesus, when he visited Jerusalem, Luke xxi. 37. It would seem that he often sought retirement in the particular spot here indicated. It is not unreasonable to suppose he sought it, that he might privately commune with God; for he was accustomed to pray in solitude. Luke vi. 12. It is supposed that, at this time and place, he offered prayer, in the agony of his spirit, as narrated in Matt. xxvi. 36—46; Luke xxii. 39—46. It has been suggested by commentators, that John probably omits that

chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

scene, because it had already been so particularly described by the other evangelists. It cannot escape the reader's notice, that this evangelist treats chiefly of discourses and events, which the others had omitted or but slightly noticed.

3. See note on Matt. xxvi. 47. ¶ *Lanterns.* It was now about the full of the moon, as the passover was always celebrated at that season; but the evening may have been cloudy, or the garden deeply shaded, or both. Our Lord's pursuers had evidently determined to omit no means of finding and securing him.

4. *Knowing all things, &c.* Clearly perceiving that the moment had arrived, when he must be delivered into the hands of wicked men, and endure the extremity of their malice. ¶ *Went forth.* Probably from the most private part of the garden, whither he had retired. See Matt. xxvi. 46.

5. *I am he.* Without any effort to conceal himself or elude his adversaries, our Lord, first inquiring whom they sought, ver. 4, announces himself as the victim. Much and keenly as he dreaded that hour, when it came, it found him prepared. The struggle was at an end, and he ready to be offered.

6. *Went backward, &c.* It is not necessary to suppose any miraculous power was exerted to produce this effect. The band which accompanied Judas was probably composed, not of men who had any personal antipathy to Jesus, but of hired soldiers. These were surprised at his sudden appearance, and awed by his calm and majestic demeanor. They felt that they were in the presence of a superior, and pros-



7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none.

10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

trated themselves, after the Eastern fashion.

7, 9. *I have told you, &c.* Having repeated his question and again received answer that it was himself they sought, he renewed his assurance that he was the individual. But he had a further object, beyond indicating that their search had been successful, as is manifest from what follows. ¶ *Let these go their way.* Let my disciples depart, unharmed and unmolested. It might have been their intention to seize these also. But Jesus desired their preservation, that they might be witnesses for him, after his departure to the Father. He therefore caused the *officers* (ver. 3,) to say repeatedly that they sought him alone; hence, when he surrendered himself, he could rightfully demand that none other should be arrested.

9. *That the saying, &c.* If the evangelist here refers to chap. xvii. 12, it seems necessary to understand the *saying* in a sense somewhat different from that in which it is there used. There it indicates preservation from apostasy; but here it seems rather to indicate the preservation of life; for this only could be secured, by procuring liberty for them to *go their way*, ver. 8.

10-12. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 50-51. ¶ *The cup which, &c.* Jesus here refers to the sufferings he was soon to undergo. He had often before used the same figure. Matt. xx. 22, 23; xxvi.

12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And led him away to Annas first, (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.)

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus, into the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that

39, 42; and truly he drained it to the very dregs.

13-18. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 57, 58.

13. *Annas.* He had formerly been high priest, and was father-in-law to Caiaphas who then held that office. Perhaps it was thought that his public approval of the violent measures then in progress would have an important influence with the populace, to keep them from opposing, or induce them to join in the work of destruction. ¶ *That same year.* See note on Luke iii. 2.

14. *He which gave counsel, &c.* See John xi. 49, 50. Before such a judge, a fair and impartial trial was not to be expected.

15. *Another disciple.* Generally supposed to have been John himself. He forbears to give his own name, as in John xiii. 23. A like instance of modesty is discoverable in Matt. ix. 10, where the evangelist merely says that "Jesus sat at meat in the house;" but by comparing Luke v. 27-29, it appears that this was "a great feast," given by Matthew himself. There is nothing vain-glorious in the gospel narratives. The evangelists preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. 2 Cor. iv. 5. ¶ *Was known.* Although the high priest was acquainted with this disciple, no disposition was manifested to harm him. And hence, Peter's fears would seem to have been unfounded. Perhaps the Jews thought

other disciple which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; (for it was cold) and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

if they could smite the shepherd, the sheep would be so effectually scattered that they would never again be gathered. Matt. xxvi. 31.

16—18. The case of Peter, narrated here and in ver. 25—27, is noticed in notes on Matt. xxvi. 57, 58, 69—75; Mark xiv. 53—72.

19. *Of his disciples.* Concerning his disciples. The charge of blasphemy was urged before the high-priest, and of sedition and treason, before the Roman governor. Caiaphas was willing to extort something from Jesus, which might be available in support of either charge. His inquiry concerning the disciples may be understood, therefore, in respect to their *number*, whether they were sufficiently numerous to justify the charge of sedition; or in respect to their *conduct*, whether it were inconsistent with the Mosaic Law, and could be urged in proof that they had been blasphemously taught to despise that law. The former, however, would seem to have been the principal design. ¶ *Of his doctrine.* He was required to make a public declaration concerning the doctrine he had taught to the people. They hoped to obtain something which might be tortured into blasphemy, or opposition to the civil law. All this process was highly improper, as no person is bound to furnish evidence which might criminate himself; and his declarations of innocence would be disregarded.

20, 21. *I spake openly, &c.* I have practised no concealment. What I have

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of

taught I have taught publicly in the synagogue and temple, where multitudes resort for religious instruction. I have not taught in secret, but, in the face of the world, adversaries as well as friends, I have borne a public and fearless testimony to the truth. ¶ *Ask them.* This was a most effectual protestation of innocence; as much as to say, I appeal to all who have heard me, whether I have uttered a blasphemous, or treasonable, or any other improper sentiment, during my whole ministry. At the same time, he required, as the most humble individual has a right to require, that the charge against him should be *proved* before he was condemned. He demanded justice, though it was denied. See ver. 23.

22. *One of the officers.* Perhaps one of those who had charge of the band, ver. 3; or perhaps an inferior officer of the ecclesiastical court. ¶ *Struck Jesus.* This was both illegal and brutal. It illustrates the feelings of them who arraigned and condemned Jesus, that this should be done and should pass without rebuke by the constituted authorities. ¶ *Answerest thou, &c.* His answer was proper, and consistent with the eternal rule of right. Meek and humble as our Lord was, he claimed the observance of that law which his adversaries professed to hold in the highest reverence; he claimed no more; and this claim cannot be regarded as even disrespectful.

23. *Bear witness, &c.* If I have done wrong, let my fault be made manifest

the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.)

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest (being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

and be legally punished. ¶ *Why smitest, &c.* If I have spoken properly, if, I have demanded no more than my right, why inflict this violence on me? From this firm remonstrance we learn, that, when our Lord commanded his disciples that they should not resist evil, but turn the other cheek when one had been smitten, Matt. v. 39, he did not mean that they must tamely submit to every species of indignity which evil men should inflict; but only that, while they might manfully protest against the evil works of others, they should not return evil for evil.

24. *Annas had sent, &c.* See ver. 13; compare Matt. xxvi. 57.

25—27. See note on ver. 16—18.

23. *Hall of judgment.* Or, Prætorium, Mark xv. 16. The same word is rendered "common hall" in Matt. xxvii. 27. ¶ *Be defiled.* They considered contact with the heathen equivalent to contact with a dead body. Hence they would not enter the heathen court, at that time. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 19, 27. This was a remarkable instance of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, Matt. xxiii. 24. They were very apprehensive of contracting any ceremonial defilement which might interfere with their celebration of the passover; but at the same time they not only did not hesitate, but were actually impatient, to imbrue their hands in innocent blood. ¶ *Eat the passover.* "If they had eaten the passover on the night before, as Jesus did, this must relate to the sacrifices, called peace-offerings, which were to accompany the

28 ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews

eating of the paschal lamb. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 8, and Deut. xvi. 2, compared with Numb. xxviii. 19. But it seems more probable, that these Jews had not then eaten the paschal lamb, and that it was thought lawful in Jesus' days—for the Jews to eat it on any hour between the evening of Thursday and that of Friday," &c.—*Pearce*. Other commentators, however, are very confident that the lamb had been eaten by all the Jews, and that the word passover here denotes the feast, which continued for several days after the sacrifice of the lamb.

29. *Pilate then went out, &c.* As the Jews entered not the judgment-hall, but sent Jesus in with the soldiers, the governor went out to learn what was the allegation against him. Subsequently, his judicial seat was removed from the hall and placed on the *pavement*, and there he rendered judgment. John xix. 13. See note on Matt. xxvii. 19.

30. *If he were not a malefactor.* Or, evil-doer; a transgressor of the law. The Jews appear to have expected that Jesus would be condemned by Pilate without any further examination. They had not presented any allegation, they only presented *him* as a malefactor. Contrary to their expectation, Pilate proceeded with the form of a trial, being desirous, if possible, to acquit Jesus. Matt. xxvii. 19.

31. *Judge him, &c.* Examine the facts, and determine what punishment is due, according to the Jewish law. He had good reason to suppose this examination had already been made, else Jesus would not have been presented

therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death :

32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the

for judgment. But he seems to have been desirous to avoid responsibility and to throw it on the Jews. ¶ *It is not lawful*, &c. They insisted that Jesus deserved death; but professed to be prohibited by law from inflicting that penalty. They sometimes destroyed life in a tumultuous manner, John x. 31; Acts vii. 57—60; but they could not lawfully execute capital punishment.

32. *That the saying*, &c. To wit, that he should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, and be put to death by them, Matt. xx. 18, 19; and that he should die by crucifixion, John xii. 32, 33. The Jews, it is universally allowed, had no power to crucify. This was peculiarly a Roman punishment. Had they destroyed his life, without the intervention of the civil power, he would not have been slain either by the Gentiles or on the cross.

33. *Art thou the King of the Jews?* See note on Matt. xxvii. 11.

34. *Sayest thou this*, &c. As if he had said, Have you seen or known anything in my conduct, which causes you to suspect me of treasonable designs against the Roman government, or a design to assume regal authority? or is this a report which you have heard from my adversaries? or have they devised this plan to convict me out of my own mouth? Here as before, Jesus demanded a fair trial, and protested against being condemned by unfair means.

35. *Am I a Jew?* It is supposed that Pilate desired, by this question, to satisfy Jesus that he was not improperly moved by Jewish prejudices.

chief priests, have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.

¶ *Thine own nation*, &c. But he adds, that the charge was a grave one; and as it was urged by the countrymen of Jesus, it deserved serious consideration. ¶ *What hast thou done?* How have you excited them to accuse you of treason, and to put your life in peril?

36. *My kingdom is not*, &c. Pilate having thus explained the purpose of his question, ver. 33, Jesus replied to it. The charge against him was, that he pretended to be a king, Luke xxiii. 2. He substantially acknowledged himself to be a king; but asserted that his dominion was not earthly, but spiritual. He did not claim to interfere with the civil government. He added a circumstance which strongly corroborated his assertion; namely, that if his kingdom were of the earth, his servants would have made an effort at least to prevent him from falling into the hands of his adversaries. ¶ *Not from hence*. Not of this world; not earthly, like the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

37. *Art thou a king, then?* "Thou art king, then."—*Campbell*. See note on Matt. xxvii. 11. Pilate manifested surprise that Jesus should admit his pretensions to be a king, in any sense. ¶ *Thou sayest*, &c. This, according to the Hebrew idiom, is equivalent to saying, Thou sayest *truly* that I am a king. But here, as in ver. 36, there is a distinct intimation that the kingdom of Jesus was not such as need interfere with the existing governments of the earth; so that his pretensions were not treasonable. ¶ *To this end*, &c. See John iii. 11, 12. "Jesus does not here

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*.

39 But ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**T**HEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.

affirm that he was born to *reign*, that this was the *design* of his coming; but it was to bear witness to, and exhibit, the *truth*. By this he showed what was the *nature* of his kingdom. It was not to assert power; not to collect armies; not to subdue nations in battle. It was simply to present truth to men, and to exercise dominion only by the truth."—*Barnes*. Through the influence of divine truth, as revealed and testified by Jesus, all are eventually to be made free from sin and sanctified or made holy. John viii. 32, 36; xvii. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Heb. viii. 11. ¶ *Every one, &c.* See note on John viii. 47.

33. *What is truth?* We cannot well believe Pilate proposed this question for the sake of information, as he went out immediately, not waiting for a reply. It was probably an expression of contempt; as if all religious opinions among the Jews were absurd. "Pilate seems to have meant, what is truth to me? I am the governor, and my duty is to keep all things quiet and in order. What truth in general is, or what the truth of your religion in particular, is no concern of mine, as governor."—*Pearce*. ¶ *I find in him no fault at all*. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 23; Luke xxiii. 4. Pilate was satisfied that Jesus had no intention to interfere with the Roman government, and that his pretensions did not conflict with its security; and therefore that he was innocent of the crime alleged against him. He may have regarded him as a deluded fanatic; he may have despised him

4 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief priests there-

as an ignorant enthusiast, professing to have ability to solve the great question of *truth* which had perplexed the wisest philosophers; or he may have suspected that he was actually the Messiah promised to the Jews. But whatever else he may have thought concerning him, he clearly did not regard him as a seditious, rebellious subject of Rome, or in any respect guilty of treason. Hence he declared to the people that he found no evidence of his guilt.

39, 40. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 15—23.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1—3. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 26—30. See also Mark xv. 15—19.

4. *Behold I bring, &c.* Pilate had twice before gone out from the judgment-hall, with the intention of delivering Jesus from his persecutors. John xviii. 29, 38. Not having enough moral courage to stem the current of popular fury, he resorted to the expedient of inflicting a less punishment on an innocent person in order to avoid a greater. Hence he scourged Jesus, which was usual, as preparatory to crucifixion, and then made another appeal to the people, hoping they might be satisfied with the punishment already inflicted; and again protested his belief that Jesus was innocent.

5. *Behold the man*. Pointing, probably, to the meek and patient sufferer, gorgeously clothed in mockery of his supposed ambitious pretensions, his head encircled with the thorny crown,

fore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made him-

and his body lacerated with the scourge, Pilate directed the attention of the people to their victim, hoping to obtain from their compassion what they had refused to grant, when their reason was addressed. But his appeal was vain; the tender mercies of that throng were cruel. Prov. xii. 10.

6. *Crucify him.* See notes on Matt. xxvii. 22, 23. The multitude had become so excited by the artful representations of the priests that Jesus was a blasphemer, that nothing short of his death would satisfy them. They were probably the more exasperated by the apparent unwillingness of Pilate to shed innocent blood; hence they attempted to overawe him by their uproar, and they were successful. It too often happens, even now, that attempts are made, by popular demonstrations, to prevent the regular administration of justice; and executive officers are most furiously assailed, to compel them to punish men whose guilt appears doubtful, or to screen the manifestly guilty from due punishment, and turn them loose upon society, to the hazard of the general peace and safety. Honor to those who faithfully and conscientiously perform their duty, under such trying circumstances. But those, who, like Pilate, condemn and punish the innocent, and let the guilty go free, (Luke xxiii. 18, 19; John xviii. 39, 40,) merely to gratify the passions or avoid the clamors of the populace, give convincing evidence that they love the praise of men more than the praise of God, John xii. 43, and that they are unfit to execute justice. Rom. xiii. 3, 4. ¶ *Take ye him, &c.* Pilate yielded to the clamor, but attempted to throw the whole responsibility on the people. This, however, he could not do; for he had a sufficient military force under his command, to quell the mob, and restore quiet, and at the same time preserve the life of Jesus. He only lacked moral courage. See note on Matt. xxvii. 24.

self the Son of God.

8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

7. *We have a law, &c.* As Pilate continued to assert that there was no evidence to support the charge of treason against Jesus, the Jews fell back upon their former charge of blasphemy, which had been urged before the ecclesiastical tribunal, and to which only can they be understood here to refer. And they insisted that, whether guilty of treason or not, he ought to die. Lev. xxiv. 16; Deut. xiii. 1—5. ¶ *The Son of God.* See notes on John x. 31—36. The Jews contended that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, in asserting his Messiahship, or Sonship, in the terms which he used.

8. *The more afraid.* His previous fear is not distinctly announced by this evangelist; but it is mentioned, and the cause of it, in Matt. xxvii. 19. Knowing that an illustrious divine messenger was expected, Pilate became more apprehensive, when he learned that Jesus, of whose innocence he was fully satisfied, claimed to be that person. He then as he was, he feared he might incur the divine vengeance, should he be accessory to the death of such a personage.

9. *Whence art thou?* This question was proposed for the solving of the mystery by which Pilate was painfully perplexed. He desired to know from Jesus himself, whether he claimed to be a messenger from God. ¶ *Jesus gave him no answer.* Various reasons have been assigned for this silence of our Lord. As his innocence on the charge of treason was manifest, there was no need that he should reply; for no other charge was properly a subject of adjudication. It might have been difficult for a heathen at once to comprehend a definite answer to the question. Moreover, he had already been informed in part, John xviii. 36, 37; but that information excited his contempt rather than his serious regard. It suited not the divine purpose, that Jesus should say anything to prevent the consummation which was at hand; otherwise, how should the prophecies have been ful-

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldst not have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate

filled? Luke xviii. 31—33; xxiv. 25—27. It was sufficient, to say and do what was necessary for the full manifestation of his innocence.

10. *Speakest thou not, &c.* Pilate was not accustomed to such apparent disrespect. His pride was touched, and he intimated to Jesus that, as he had power to kill or to preserve alive, prudence demanded an explicit answer to all his questions. Jesus was not intimidated by the implied threat; nor did he ask as a *favor* what was denied as *justice*.

11. *No power, &c.* That is, over my life. Some understand this to indicate that the power was given by God; others, that it was delegated by the Roman Government. The meaning of the verse is involved in some obscurity. The interpretation by Pearce appears as correct and judicious as any which I recollect to have seen. "God is here said to *give* that power which he *suffers* a man to exercise. The Greek word is rendered by *suffer* in Acts xiii. 35, agreeably to Ps. xvi. 10. Because thou hast power to crucify or release me, the Jews, or the high priest, who delivered me to thee, have the more to answer for; it was a crime in them to vote that I deserved death; but a greater one in them, when they could not of themselves put me to death, to influence thee, the Roman Governor, to do it for them. This is a conclusion, not from what is said immediately before it, but from what is said in ver. 10; namely, that Pilate had a power to crucify or release Jesus; therefore Judas' and the high priest's delivering Jesus to Pilate was a sin so much the greater."

12. *Pilate sought, &c.* Hence it would seem he went out a fourth time to the people, for this purpose. See note on ver. 4. ¶ *But the Jews cried out, &c.* This was an overpowering argu-

sought to release him. but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar.

13 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

ment to a man of Pilate's timidity. He had been strongly moved by the popular clamor; he was utterly overcome by the threat of an accusation to Cæsar. He well knew the jealous, suspicious nature of his imperial master, Tiberius Cæsar. He feared he should lose his office, if not his life, should he be accused. Rather than incur this peril, he consented to the death of Jesus, whom he had repeatedly pronounced guiltless, innocent of any fault. See note on Matt. xxvii. 24. But this selfish, time-serving governor, who preferred to shed innocent blood and brave the vengeance of heaven, (note on ver. 8,) rather than be accused of unfriendliness to Cæsar, afterwards, by a just retribution, met the fate which he was thus criminally anxious to avoid. He lost his office, was banished, and became so miserable that he ended his mortal life by suicide. See note on Matt. xxvii. 2.

2. ¶ *Cæsar's friend.* A loyal, dutiful subject; a true supporter of the government. The point of the threat was that he should be accused as a traitor. ¶ *Whosoever maketh, &c.* The Jews, perverting the language of Jesus, returned to their former charge of treason against him, and asserted that he claimed to be king, in a rebellious, treasonable sense.

13. *Judgment-seat.* The tribunal, or the seat occupied by the magistrate when pronouncing judgment. ¶ *Pavement.* This word ordinarily denotes a flooring of stones or bricks. It here indicates the open area or court enclosed by the judgment-hall; or rather, perhaps, that elevated portion of it where the tribunal was placed. The Jews had entered this court; but they would not go into the hall. Pilate, therefore, overcome by their last threat, came out from the hall into the court, pronounced judgment, and delivered the victim into their

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cesar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him,

hands. ¶ *Gabbatha*. This is a Hebrew word, signifying *high*, or *elevated*.

14. *The preparation of the passover*. Some suppose the words of the *passover* are here interpolated; because they are not found in ver. 31, 42, where the same *preparation* is evidently referred to, and because the day of the passover had already come, and had partly elapsed. Others, with apparently better reason, admit the words to be genuine, but suppose them to refer to the sabbath, called the passover because it occurred during that feast, and was uniformly marked by peculiar ceremonies and solemnities. Thus Campbell translates, "The preparation of the paschal-sabbath." In Mark xv. 42, it is expressly called "the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath." ¶ *The sixth hour*. "It was the third hour, and they crucified him." Mark xv. 25. This difference, between twelve o'clock, or noon, according to John, and nine o'clock in the forenoon, according to Mark, has been variously accounted for by commentators. As observed, in the note on Mark xv. 25, the more common opinion is, that both evangelists indicated the hour by a single letter, according to the method of expressing numbers, then in use, and that some transcriber had early mistaken the character. Some suppose that Mark names the time when the preparations for the crucifixion commenced; and John, when Jesus was actually nailed to the cross. However this be, the dis-

and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

23 ¶ Then the soldiers, when

crepancy is less in fact than in appearance. Mark says "it was the third hour," indicating that it was after nine o'clock, or that the hour had past; John does not speak definitely, but says "about the sixth hour," or not far from noon. Such a variation would not impeach the veracity of either, in a narrative related by two profane historians; nor should it here. Moreover, it is to be observed, that the *darkness* is uniformly represented as continuing from the sixth to the ninth hour, Matt. xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 33; Luke xxiii. 44; probably marking the time which elapsed while Jesus actually hung on the cross.

16—22. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 32—37; Mark xv. 20—26; Luke xxiii. 26—33.

21. *Write not, &c.* The Jews were dissatisfied with the inscription, or accusation, prepared by Pilate, and requested that it might be corrected. Perhaps they feared the effect on the popular mind would be unfavorable, leading them to suspect that, after all, Jesus was truly the king whom they had been expecting.

22. *What I have written, I have written*. Equivalent to saying, it shall stand as I have written it; I will not alter it. Pilate had already yielded to them, even criminally, as he must have been sensible; he was becoming weary and impatient of their clamors; and he declared that he would not be troubled further, in a mere matter of form.



they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple stand-

23. *Four parts, &c.* Hence it appears that four soldiers had special charge of the crucifixion. Probably a larger number were present, to prevent any confusion among the people; these four may have been the executioners. They divided the outer garment between them. The *coat*, or tunic, or inner garment, was disposed of by *lot*, ver. 24. ¶ *Without seam.* The high priest's vesture was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and the sides, but it was one long vestment so woven as to have an aperture for the neck; not an oblique one, but parted all along the breast and the back. A border also was sewed to it, lest the aperture should look too indecently; it was also parted, where the hands were to come out."—*Josephus*, Ant., B. III. ch. vii. § 4. That which Jesus wore seems to have been similar; and it was proper that the great High Priest of our profession should be thus clothed.

24. *Let us not rend it, &c.* The outer garment, with its appendages, might be divided, without material harm. But the coat was so made, that, if rent, it would become useless. This verse has furnished a theme for many fanciful imaginings; but it seems needless to dream of mysteries beyond the plain meaning of the record. ¶ *That the scripture, &c.* Ps. xxii. 18.

25—27. John here narrates an affect-

ing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

ing circumstance, which the other evangelists omit. During his most intense agony, our Lord did not forget the mother who rejoiced at his birth, watched tenderly over his infancy, and regarded him with the most lively interest while he remained on the earth. Her husband being probably now dead, Jesus committed her to the care of his most confidential and affectionate disciple, who cheerfully and faithfully executed the trust committed to him. ¶ *Whom he loved.* See note on John xiii. 23. ¶ *Woman.* See note on John ii. 4. ¶ *Behold thy son.* Let him be a son to thee, instead of me. ¶ *Behold thy mother.* Regard her as a mother, and perform for her the filial duty of a son, for my sake and in my name. ¶ *From that hour, &c.* Tradition says the mother of Jesus lived about fifteen years after his crucifixion, and that she dwelt with John. According to the testimony here, she dwelt with him while she lived, whatever was the precise period.

23—30. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 48—50. See also Mark xv. 36, 37; Luke xxiii. 46. ¶ *That the scripture, &c.* See Ps. lxi. 21. ¶ *I thirst.* It is said that the sufferings of crucified persons are always attended by extreme thirst. ¶ *It is finished.* All things written concerning him had been accomplished; the work committed unto him by the Father had been completed.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was a high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

the mystery hid from ages had been revealed; life and immortality brought to light; the unchanging love of God to man displayed; and the system of means put in successful operation, which should result in enlightening and sanctifying the human family. It only remained that he should confirm all things by his death and resurrection, and then ascend to his Father, and reign until the full consummation of his labors. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Heb. ii. 8, 9.

31—37. See note on Matt. xxvii. 57.

31. *The preparation.* See note on ver. 14. ¶ *That the bodies, &c.* In Deut. xxi. 22, 23, it is forbidden that the bodies of executed criminals should hang on the tree, or, as we should say, on the gallows, during the sabbath. Death by hanging is very speedy, if not instantaneous. This law, therefore, was easily observed. When the Romans introduced crucifixion into Judea, a punishment which sometimes did not result in death for several days, it became necessary to hasten death by other means, in order to avoid a transgression of the Jewish law. This the Jews desired in the present case. ¶ *High day.* Literally, *a great day*. So called, because it was the paschal-sabbath, the great day of the feast. ¶ *That their legs might be broken.* In order to hasten their death. When the legs were broken, the whole weight of the body fell upon the arms, and the additional pain thus produced, with that occasioned by the fracture of the limbs, generally ended in speedy death.

32, 33. Having broken the legs of the thieves, they discovered, by the usual indications that Jesus *was dead already*. Perhaps the centurion called their attention to the fact. Matt. xxvii. 54. It should be remembered that Jesus had become exhausted by his agony in the

33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

35 And he that saw *it*, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done,

garden, by the excitement, and trials, and wakefulness, of the preceding thirty hours, and by the scourging he had endured. His death was doubtless hastened by these preceding sufferings.

34. *Pierced his side.* One of the soldiers, doubting perhaps whether he were dead or in a swoon, thrust a spear into his side, so deeply, that this wound alone would have destroyed life, if it had not already been extinct. From what follows, it is probable it penetrated to the heart. ¶ *Blood and water.* Generally supposed to be the watery substance which is contained in the *pericardium*, or membrane enclosing the heart, vulgarly called the heart-case. This would have the appearance of water. The blood flowed from the heart, or some other large blood-vessel. "This was a natural effect, and would follow in any other case. Commentators have almost uniformly supposed that this was significant; as, for example, that the blood was an emblem of the Eucharist, and the water of baptism, or that the blood denoted justification, and the water sanctification. But that this was the design, there is not the slightest evidence. It was strictly a natural result, adduced by John to establish *one* fact on which the whole of Christianity turns, that *he was truly dead*."—Barnes. See note, end of Matt. xxviii.

35. *He that saw it, &c.* That is, John himself. He frequently speaks of himself in the third person. ¶ *Knoweth that he saith true.* He did not speak from *hearsay*, or the testimony of others. He was a personal witness of the fact narrated; he knew what he said and whereof he affirmed. ¶ *That ye might believe.* It is supposed that John was thus urgent to establish the fact that Jesus actually died, and there-

that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

38 ¶ And after this, Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus (which at the first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a

hundred pounds weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation-day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the

fore asserted that fact so circumstantially and positively, because the Gnostics had then begun to teach that his death was only in *appearance*. But it must have been actual, else his resurrection would furnish no proof of ours. Hence this evangelist is so particular on this point.

36, 37. *That the scripture, &c.* See Exo. xii. 46. John here applies what was said of the paschal lamb to Jesus, of whom it has always been regarded as a type. Some, however, suppose the reference to be to Ps. xxxiv. 20. But the former interpretation is the more general. ¶ *Another scripture.* See Zech. xii. 10. It is worthy of remark, that the Jews, while using every effort in their power to prove that Jesus was not the Messiah, but an impostor, fulfilled or procured to be fulfilled so many prophecies which they acknowledged were uttered concerning the Messiah; and all this, without the least apparent consciousness that they were confirming his testimony and condemning themselves. Had the prophecies depended for their fulfilment on the conduct of friends, it might have been said by scoffers, that they were fulfilled by them in order to consummate a deception. But the fact was otherwise. So far as the fulfilment of prophecy by man was concerned, the work was accomplished almost exclusively by enemies. Thus marvellously does God cause the wrath of man to praise him, and restrain the remainder. The enemies of Jesus

furnished convincing evidence of his Messiahship.

33, 39. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 57, 58. See also Mark xv. 43, 45; Luke xxiii. 50—52. ¶ *Joseph.* He was a member of the Sanhedrim, but had not consented to the death of Jesus, as is fully related by Luke. He was a *disciple of Jesus*; but, like Nicodemus, concealed his faith, *for fear of the Jews*. He seems to have been roused to courage by these violent and bloody proceedings, and claimed the body of Jesus, for burial,—a service which none of his disciples had courage or confidence to perform. ¶ *Nicodemus.* This was another timid disciple, also a member of the Sanhedrim. See John iii. 1, 2. At the least, he deserves credit for this final act of devotion.

40—42. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 59, 60. See also Mark xv. 46; Luke xxiii. 53, 54. ¶ *There was a garden.* Many such were in the suburbs of Jerusalem; and Jesus was crucified without the walls of the city. ¶ *Wherein was never, &c.* An important circumstance, inasmuch as no other body could be mistaken for that of our Lord. ¶ *Preparation-day.* See note on ver. 14. The burial seems to have been hurried, on account of the approaching sabbath. The whole tragedy was consummated, the betrayal, the trial, the crucifixion, and the burial, in about eighteen hours, or between midnight and the succeeding sunset. But the effect shall endure while the world standeth.

sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie;

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen

clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said,

## CHAPTER XX.

1—18. For some remarks on the *order* of the events here narrated, see note on Matt. xxviii. 9. And on the general subject of the resurrection of our Lord, see notes on Matt. ch. xxviii.; Mark xvi. 1—11; Luke xxiv. 1—12.

2. *We know not where*, &c. None of the disciples had any expectation that Jesus would rise from the dead, ver. 9. When Mary Magdalene ascertained, therefore, that the body was not in the sepulchre, she supposed it had been taken away by human hands.

3. *That other disciple*. Probably John himself. See notes on John xviii. 15; xix. 35.

8. *And believed*. Not that a resurrection had taken place; for this was a doctrine which none of the disciples yet understood, ver. 9; and subsequently, when Mary and the other women informed the disciples that they had seen Jesus alive, not one of them believed. Mark xvi. 9—14; Luke xxiv. 11. The meaning is, that he *saw* and *believed* that the body was gone, according to the story of Mary.

9. *Knew not the scripture*. See notes

on Luke xxiv. 25—27. They understood not the ancient predictions concerning the death of Christ: nor did they understand his own plain and repeated declarations that he should rise from the dead. Understanding neither, their hopes were blasted; and while they still believed he was a good man and a prophet, they evidently abandoned their faith in him as the Messiah. See note, end of Matt. xxviii., and Luke xxiv. 19—21.

13. *They have taken*, &c. Mary had returned to the sepulchre with Peter and John. After their departure, she lingered near the sepulchre, weeping that even the remains of him who had so richly blessed her and whom she so affectionately loved were taken away and hidden from her sight. So absorbed was she in grief, that, when accosted by the angels, she noticed nothing extraordinary in their appearance; but answered their question, and turned away, ver. 14, that she might weep in secret. She still supposed the body of her Lord had been removed by human agency. See also ver. 15.

14. *Knew not that it was Jesus*. It is not necessary to suppose that he had not

she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended

his ordinary appearance, or that he was "in another form," Mark xvi. 12, even though this devoted disciple did not recognize him. She had not the least expectation of meeting her *living* Lord; moreover, it was very early in the morning, before the full light of day had appeared, and her eyes were suffused with tears and dimmed by weeping; and as she supposed it might be the gardener who addressed her, it is not probable that she scrutinized his features very attentively.

15. See notes on ver. 2, 13, 14.

16. *Mary*. This word was doubtless uttered in a familiar tone, to which her heart instantly responded. That voice which pronounced the forgiveness of her sins, which came to her with soothing and consoling power, which raised the beloved Lazarus from the dead, which gave assurance of a blessed and holy immortality, was recognized at once, and her heart leaped with joy. ¶ *Rabboni*. Overpowered by unexpected joy, she could only exclaim, Master! Her heart was too full for utterance. Her silence was more eloquent than any language could be. The evangelist interprets the meaning of this word; but preserves also the original, perhaps for a reason similar to that mentioned in note on Mark v. 41.

17. *Touch me not*. The first impulse of Mary was probably to cast herself at the feet of Jesus and embrace them. But he prevented her,—having a different service for her to perform. Intimating that he was not immediately to ascend, and that there would be another opportunity to see him and express the fulness

to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

of her gratitude and joy, he directed her to inform his disciples that he had risen and would soon ascend. It has surprised some that Jesus should forbid this devoted female to touch his feet, and so soon afterwards, ver. 27, insist that the unbelieving Thomas should touch not only his feet, but his hands and his side. The reason, however, is sufficiently obvious. Thomas did not believe in the resurrection, and was to be convinced. But Mary had not the slightest doubt, from the moment when she heard her name pronounced in tones which thrilled her heart. ¶ *My brethren*. That is, the eleven who remained of the original twelve apostles. See John xv. 15. ¶ *My Father and your Father, &c.* "Nothing was better fitted to afford them consolation than this assurance that his God was theirs, and that though he had been slain, they were still indissolubly united in attachment to the same Father."—*Barnes*. It should not be overlooked, that our Lord recognized the same distinction between the Father and himself, acknowledging the Father as his God, after his resurrection, as before his death.

19, 20. See notes on Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36—40. ¶ *The same day at evening*. That is, on the evening of the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection of Jesus, hence called the Lord's day. ¶ *The disciples were assembled*. This may be regarded as the first Christian assembly on the Lord's day, though the disciples probably convened for other purposes than religious worship at this time. They were in the utmost perplexity. They knew their

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you : as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Master had been crucified. They knew his body was missing. They had been told by Mary and the other women, that he was alive. But they did not believe. They probably assembled for consultation and mutual advice, concerning the amazing events which had occurred. They met in secret, with closed doors, through fear of the Jews ; for though they had escaped apprehension with their Master, John xviii. 8, they feared that they should be the next victims. ¶ *Stood in the midst.* See note on Luke xxiv. 36, 39. His sudden appearance surprised and terrified them. Probably the doors were fastened as well as shut, to guard against intrusion by the Jews. But, however Jesus entered, whether miraculously or not, they seem not to have perceived him, until he stood in the midst of them, or in the centre of the room. They supposed him to be a *spirit*, or that the appearance was supernatural. But he speedily quieted their fears. ¶ *Peace be unto you.* This usual Jewish form of salutation was peculiarly appropriate. He desired to dispel their fears, to calm their anxiety, and to give them peace in the full assurance that he had been dead and was alive again. ¶ *He showed unto them his hands, &c.* Thus exhibiting evidence of his identity. ¶ *The disciples glad, &c.* That is, the *ten* who were present. They were convinced, and they were *glad*, in the simple but expressive language of the evangelist. Thomas was absent, ver. 24.

21. *As my Father, &c.* Having repeated his invocation of peace, and further assured the hearts of his disciples, he reminded them that the time had arrived when they must commence the labor to which they were long before ordained. As the Father sent the Son to bear witness to the truth, John xviii. 37, to labor and suffer reproach and in-

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the

dignity, for the benefit of mankind, so now the Son would send forth those whom he had instructed and prepared for their ministry. They lacked only one endowment,—the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Truth. But this had been promised, and Jesus now gave them renewed assurance that they should receive it.

22. *Breathed on them.* According to the prophetic manner of speaking by signs, or accompanying language by signs, Jesus *breathed* on his disciples, as an emblem and assurance of that spiritual influence soon to be imparted unto them. The word translated *spirit* means also *wind, air, breath*. The emblem was significant. See John iii. 8 ; Acts ii. 1—4. ¶ *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* The most natural interpretation would be, receive this gift *now*, were it not for the testimony in Acts i. 4, 5 ; ii. 1—4, 33. The true meaning appears to be, ye *shall receive* the Holy Ghost, to qualify you fully for the mission upon which I send you, ver. 21.

23. *Whosoever sins ye remit, &c.* See notes on Matt. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 18—20. It is the uniform belief of all Protestant Christians that no man hath power to forgive sins, in the proper sense of the terms. The apostles were commissioned to preach repentance and the remission of sins in the name of Jesus, Luke xxiv. 47. They were here empowered, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to determine whether men so exercised faith and repentance as to become free from the power of sin, Acts ii. 38 ; xiii. 38, 39 ; also to retain the sins of unbelieving, ungodly men, or to pronounce them still under the power of sin and in bondage to iniquity.

24. *Thomas—Didymus.* The former is the Hebrew and the latter the Greek name of this apostle. The names have the same signification, namely, a *tw*in.

print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold

See John xi. 16. ¶ *Was not with them, &c.* This is mentioned, to account for his unbelief.

25. *Except I shall see, &c.* We have here the most satisfactory evidence that the resurrection of Jesus was not believed by his disciples on slight or insufficient testimony. Had they confidently expected it, and believed the first intimation of it, there would be room to suspect some deception or delusion. But, instead of this, not one of the apostles would believe, until he received personal satisfaction.

26, 27. *After eight days.* Generally understood to mean the eighth day subsequent to the one last mentioned, or the succeeding Lord's day. It is not certain, however, that the day here mentioned was the first day of the week. ¶ *Reach hither, &c.* Unreasonable as the demand of Thomas may appear, yet he received the evidence he required, and obtained personal satisfaction that his Master was truly alive again. ¶ *Faithless.* This word here means simply incredulous. Be no longer unbelieving or doubtful; but examine and believe.

23. *My Lord and my God.* These words have been understood as ascribing supreme divinity to the Lord Jesus Christ. The argument is, that Thomas called him God, and was not rebuked but rather commended. I regard them rather as an exclamation of sudden wonder and surprise. Thomas was subject to strong and violent emotions, John xi. 16. And, having thus long refused to credit the annunciation that his Master had risen, when Jesus suddenly and unexpectedly stood before him, exhibiting his wounded hands, and feet, and side, he gave vent to his feelings, not in studied terms, expressive of well-grounded and clearly defined

my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 ¶ And many other signs

faith, but in an unstudied, involuntary exclamation of surprise. Among the reasons which justify this interpretation, the following may be noticed. (1.) Thomas was a Jew. In common with the Jews, he believed that God was spiritual and invisible to mortal eyes. It is inconceivable that a wounded, mutilated body, even though reanimated, should be regarded by him as indicating the supreme God. (2.) None of the disciples had hitherto believed Jesus to be God. They confessed him to be the Son of God, and their confession was approved by him. Matt. xvi. 16, 17. His resurrection confirmed the fact of his Sonship, Rom. i. 4; but there is no evidence elsewhere that any apostle considered it a proof of his supreme divinity. (3.) John expressly states, in ver. 31, that the great fact designed to be proved by him is, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." And he gives no intimation that he had proved or that he believed Jesus to be the supreme God. (4.) The question designed to be settled in the mind of Thomas, by this evidence afforded by Jesus, was not whether he were the true God, but whether he had risen from the dead. This was what Thomas would not believe without visible and tangible evidence, ver. 25. On this point he had the evidence he required, and announced his belief in the exclamation in the text.

29. *Thou hast believed.* That is, that I have risen from the dead; that I, who stand here, am the same person who was crucified and whose lifeless body was deposited in the tomb. ¶ *Blessed.* Happy. The word may be understood as having the force of a comparative; more happy or blessed shall they be, who manifest a more reasonable and willing spirit than you have done, and who shall believe on proper and satis-

truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**A**FTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise shewed he himself.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didy-

factory evidence without requiring ocular demonstration. For the character of the evidence we have of the resurrection of our Lord, see note, end of Matt. xxviii. It is unreasonable to require more.

30. *Many other signs.* Or, miracles. Many such are recorded by the other evangelists; and many, we have reason to believe, were never recorded. Each evangelist related those which were most strongly impressed on his mind; except that John seems desirous to relate chiefly what was omitted by the others, both concerning the discourses and the miracles of our Lord.

31. *These are written.* Namely, the foregoing; all contained in this gospel. ¶ *That ye might believe, &c.* The evangelist here announces the object of his whole labor, which was two-fold; (1.) To convince men that Jesus was the true Messiah; and for this purpose he urges the evidence of miracles most earnestly, as well as the language of our Lord. (2.) The ultimate object was to assist in imparting life to men through the influence of faith in the Son of God and in his truth. See notes on John iii. 15—17; v. 24; xvii. 17. This is the great design of the gospel, to purify the hearts of men, through faith, to turn them from sinfulness, and lead them to the practice of holiness, and the enjoyment of God's grace; in other words, to sanctify and save them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1. *Sea of Tiberias.* Otherwise called the Sea of Galilee and Lake of Gen-

mus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast

nesareth. See notes on Matt. iv. 18; Luke v. 1. This was in Galilee, where Jesus had promised to meet his disciples. Matt. xxvi. 32; xxviii. 10, 16. Matthew gives a very brief account of this interview; Mark and Luke omit it altogether; hence John is more full, according to his usual custom. ¶ *On this wise.* In this manner.

2. *There were together, &c.* Most if not all of the disciples here named, were natives of Galilee, or resided there previously to their becoming disciples.

3. *Simon Peter saith, &c.* It was perfectly characteristic of this disciple, that he should take the lead, on this as on other occasions. ¶ *Caught nothing.* Their want of success, through the night, rendered the succeeding miracle, ver. 6, more apparent and striking.

4. *The disciples knew not, &c.* They were about twenty rods from the shore, ver. 8; and, although it was morning, perhaps it was yet very early, not fully light; in which case they may not have been able clearly to distinguish his features. It is not necessary to suppose he appeared in any unusual form.

5. *Children.* This word is frequently used as a term of endearment. John, in his Epistles, almost uniformly addresses his brethren in this affectionate manner. ¶ *Meat.* That is, food of any kind.

6. *Right side.* No reason is assigned why this side was named, rather than the other. Some have supposed it was the side nearest the shore, and apparently less likely to afford any fish. ¶ *Not able to draw it, &c.* To their



the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his fisher's coat unto him*, (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes.

utter astonishment, they enclosed a large draught of fishes. They were satisfied at once that miraculous power had been exerted, for they had toiled for several hours previously and caught nothing, ver. 3.

7. *That disciple*. Namely, John the evangelist. See note on John xiii. 23. ¶ *It is the Lord*. His conclusion was natural, for many reasons. (1.) He was expecting to meet Jesus at or near that place. (2.) He knew none other who possessed such miraculous power. (3.) He doubtless recollected a previous miracle of the same kind, which he witnessed, and on that same lake, Luke v. 1—11. Without hesitation, therefore, he expressed his belief that the person who had directed them again to cast their net was the Lord. ¶ *Girt his fisher's coat*. Probably a coarse, outer garment, worn by fishermen, when engaged in their labor; though, from what follows, it appears that it had been thrown off. ¶ *Naked*. We need not understand that he was entirely naked; but only that he was not fully clothed. He was naked, with respect to this coat. ¶ *Did cast himself, &c.* He was too impatient to wait the slow motion of the boat, cumbered as it was with the multitude of fishes.

8. *Two hundred cubits*. About twenty rods.

9. *They saw a fire, &c.* It is not asserted that this fire, and fish, and bread, were provided by miracle, yet it seems natural to conclude that such was the fact; for no intimation is given

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and tak-

that any other persons were engaged in fishing or otherwise, near that place; and from the manner in which the circumstance is here introduced, the most obvious inference is that the preparation was made by our Lord.

10. *Bring of the fish*. Bring some of the fish now taken, that there may be a provision for the bodily wants of all.

11. *Peter went up, &c.* It does not distinctly appear whether Peter went ashore, ascending from the water, or whether he reascended the vessel, and thus assisted in drawing the net to the shore. The latter is more probable, as it is likely he arrived at the shore before those who remained in the vessel; and all seem to have come to land, before this command was given, ver. 9. But the net was not yet drawn from the water. ¶ *A hundred and fifty and three*. This was an unusual number, and they were *great fishes*. The writer gives the exact number, as he was present, and probably assisted in counting them. A fanciful imagination might find in this miracle an intimation of the success which should attend the ministry of the apostles; for they were designated "fishers of men." Matt. iv. 19.

12. *Come and dine*. The Greek word here used is applied to the breakfast as well as dinner; and such is the meal here designated, for it was early in the morning, ver. 4. ¶ *Durst ask him*. Or, asked them. They knew him; but, from the time of his resurrection,

eth bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, they were awed by his unearthly character, and did not venture upon the same freedom in conversation which they had formerly indulged.

13. *Taketh bread, and giveth them, &c.* It is not said that Jesus himself ate either the fish or bread. Yet it seems probable he did. For one object of the interview was to confirm their faith in his resurrection. And, on a similar occasion, for the express purpose of affording such confirmation of faith, he called for food, and ate in their presence "a piece of broiled fish and of a honey-comb." Luke xxiv. 41—43. It is proper to conclude therefore that he ate, in like manner, on this occasion.

14. *The third time.* See John xx. 19, 26. He had previously appeared to Mary Magdalene, John xx. 14; but none of the apostles being then present, that appearance is not here reckoned. This was the third time, recorded by this evangelist, in which Jesus was seen by his *disciples* or apostles, after he rose from the dead. For a further examination of the various appearances of our Lord, see note at the end of this chapter.

15. *Lovest thou me more than these?* Commentators and critics agree that this question is capable of two interpretations, equally consistent with the language used. (1.) It may mean, Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these things, that is, thy boats and fishing apparatus? in other words, Lovest thou me more than thou lovest thine earthly possessions? and art thou willing to forsake them for my sake and the gospel's? (2.) It may mean, Lovest thou me more than these persons? or, Lovest thou me more ardently, more devotedly, than these my other apostles love me? The true meaning is to be sought from other circumstances than the language used, which is consistent with either. The former opinion is advocated by Pearce, Whithy, and others, chiefly on the ground that it would be unreasonable for Jesus to ask Peter whether his love exceeded that of the other apostles, inasmuch as he had no means of accu-

Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the rarely comparing his love with theirs. The latter is advocated by Hammond, Lightfoot, Rosenmüller and others, who reply to the foregoing objection, that Jesus does not inquire concerning an absolute matter of fact, but concerning Peter's *opinion*. He had formerly professed to cherish a more firm attachment to his Master and a more unreserved devotion to his service than any of his associates; he had declared that, though all others should stumble, he would preserve his integrity, and follow Jesus even unto death. Matt. xxvi. 33; John xiii. 37. Subsequently, he had not only deserted his Master, as did also the others, but he had three times renounced and denied him, adding profanity to his disloyalty and falsehood. Matt. xxvi. 69—75. Jesus is understood here to inquire what effect had been produced on his mind by these events; whether he were as self-confident as before; whether he still believed himself more affectionate, more devoted, more ready to do and suffer for his Lord, than the others were. ¶ *Thou knowest that I love thee.* Peter had become convinced that Jesus knew the human heart. He appealed to him, therefore, that he loved sincerely. But how different this from the former boasting Peter! He did not pretend to compare his love with that of others. He only professed his own; and appealed to Jesus that it was sincere. The word rendered *love* is not the same which occurs in the question; but for what reason does not appear, as they are considered to be synonymous in signification. ¶ *Feed.* Provide sustenance. The figure is taken from the pastoral life, and the word indicates the duty of a shepherd to provide pasturage for his flock. ¶ *Lambs.* Our Lord often designated his followers as sheep, himself being the shepherd. See, for example, John x. 1—16. By the word *lambs*, he may be understood to refer either to the young in years, or to those newly brought into the fold, recent converts, "hales in Christ," who need to be fed with milk rather than with meat.

second time, Simon *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest

all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. "It is in obedience to this command that Sunday Schools have been established, and no means of fulfilling the command of the Saviour have been found so effectual as to extend patronage to those schools."—*Barnes*.

16. *Feed*. In ver. 15, the word rendered *feed* is *boske*, (βόσκει,) meaning to provide food, as a shepherd for his flock. Here the word *poimaine*, (ποιμαίνε,) is used, which includes the idea of watching over and protecting the flock. The apostles (for this command was not designed for Peter alone) were to teach men what to believe, to place before them spiritual food, and also to give directions for the guidance of their conduct. And it is the duty of all Christians, laymen as well as clergymen, not only to use all proper exertions for mutual edification in faith, but also to watch over, advise, admonish, and uphold each other, that none may stumble and fall, or stray from the fold into the wilderness of sin. ¶ *Sheep*. A common term applied to all Christians, old or young, feeble or strong. See note on ver. 15.

17. *The third time*. The question is supposed to have been three times repeated, in reference to the fact that Peter had three times denied having any affection for Jesus, or even knowledge of him. ¶ *Peter was grieved*. The reiteration of the question appeared to imply a doubt of Peter's affection and constancy; and he well knew that such a doubt was fully justified by his previous conduct. He was humbled before the searching question of his Master, and *grieved* that any doubt should be entertained of his present sincerity. ¶ *Thou knowest all things*. He asserts nothing on his own veracity. But, appealing to him who could see the heart, he again replies, thou seest the true

state of my affections. Thou knowest I am now sincere; thou knowest, though I am frail and liable to fall, that I earnestly love thee, and desire to perform my duty faithfully. ¶ *Feed*. The same word which occurs in ver. 15.

18. In this verse, Peter is admonished that his faith and love would be put to a severe trial; that he would be called to seal his sincerity with his own blood. ¶ *When thou wast young, &c.* Thou hast hitherto been free. Thou hast girded thyself according to thine own pleasure, and travelled or not, without compulsion. When about to travel, the Jews were accustomed to fasten the outer garment with a girdle, that it might not impede them in walking. To be girded, or to have the loins girt about, was a phrase denoting readiness to travel. Girding one's self, as here used, denotes a voluntary preparation for a journey, or, more generally, a state of freedom. Probably, the figure may have been suggested by the circumstance that Peter had so recently girded himself, before leaping from the boat into the sea, ver. 7. ¶ *When thou shalt be old*. Hereafter; not immediately, but at a later period of your life. It is said by Eusebius, B. II. ch. xxv., and by other ancient writers, that Peter suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, in the reign of Nero, about A. D. 64 or 65, that is, somewhat more than thirty years after he was thus forewarned of his fate. ¶ *Stretch forth thy hands, &c.* A natural interpretation would be simply that he should raise his arms so that another might fasten a girdle around him. But, from ver. 19, it would seem that allusion is had to the position of the arms on the cross. We may understand the meaning thus: thou shalt stretch forth thy hands to be fastened to the cross, on which also they shall bind thy body,

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and

and place thee in a posture of pain ending only in death, from which humanity revolts.

19. *By what death.* By what manner of death; that is, by crucifixion. It is supposed that Peter was crucified before this gospel was written, and that the evangelist therefore speaks more confidently concerning the import of the prediction. ¶ *Glorify God.* Honor God; that is, by faithfulness and a steadfast adherence to the truth, even at the sacrifice of life. This phrase was frequently used, in the early ages, to denote martyrdom. ¶ *Follow me.* The common meaning of this phrase, when addressed by Jesus to his hearers, is, become my followers, or disciples; believe me, and obey me. But, from what follows, it seems rather to be a requisition that Peter should follow after Jesus, as he walked along the shore, in token that he was willing to follow him—to the cross, according to the foregoing intimation.

20. *The disciple.* That is, John; as is manifest from the explanation which follows; compare John xiii. 23–25, and the notes. ¶ *Following.* It would seem that when Peter obeyed the command to follow Jesus, John also rose and followed, though not specially commanded to do so. After walking a short distance, Peter, looking back, perceived the beloved disciple, and questioned our Lord, as narrated in ver. 21. “There is a spirit and tenderness in this plain passage, which I can never read without the most sensible emotion. Christ orders Peter to follow him in token of his readiness to be crucified in his cause; John stays not for the call; he rises, and follows too; but he says not one word of his love and his zeal. He chose that the action only should speak that; and when he records this circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant; but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart, that, like his own, glows with

said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?)

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

love to Christ, sees and emulates it, he it so; but he is not solicitous men should admire it. It was addressed to his Master; and it was enough that he understood it. And can any one be himself base enough to imagine that such a man could spend his life in promoting a pernicious falsehood, and at last, in his old age, when his relish for everything but goodness and immortality was gone, would so solemnly attest it as he does in the conclusion of his gospel? May God deliver every one that reads this from a head so fatally beclouded by the corruptions of the heart.”—*Doddridge.*

21. *What shall this man do?* “What shall become of this man?”—*Campbell.* The import of the question seems to be, what fate is reserved for him? Shall he also suffer martyrdom? or is a more quiet life and more peaceful death allotted him? Whether the question was prompted by kindness to John, or by a slightly envious suspicion that favor would be shown to the favorite disciple, does not appear.

22. *That he tarry.* That is, that he live. ¶ *Till I come.* “That is, live till I come to destroy the Jewish church and state. This John, and he alone of all the apostles, is said to have done.”—*Pearce.* Commentators are almost entirely unanimous on this point. “I told you of some that should escape the fury of the evil times approaching, and continue to the time that I shall come in judgment against Jerusalem, and destroy it by the Romans. And what harm is it to thee? and how art thou concerned to know, if John be one of these? Thou art likely to follow me to the cross, and the cheerful doing of that becomes thee better than this curiosity.” *Hammond.* This was actually equivalent to saying, if I will that he escape martyrdom and die in peace, what is that to thee? The early persecution against Christians was almost wholly instigated by the Jews; and when their power was broken, by the terrible ca-

**23** Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

lamity which befell them, Matt. xxiv., the disciples had rest for several years. ¶ *Follow thou me.* Here this phrase seems to have its ordinary meaning. Be a faithful and obedient disciple; let this suffice; give yourself no concern beyond your own duty.

**23.** *Then went this saying, &c.* The disciples misunderstood our Lord's meaning here, as they frequently did when he mentioned his own death and resurrection. It is not improbable that the opinion here indicated became more fully established, among the brethren, when they perceived that John actually escaped martyrdom in the midst of persecutions, and, after they had ceased, enjoyed a quiet and peaceful old age with his church at Ephesus. He thought it expedient to correct that mistake, lest his death should in any degree shake their faith. Hence he declares that Jesus did not say *he should not die*, but only that it need not concern Peter, if John should live until the event occurred which he often denominated his coming.

**24.** *This is that disciple, &c.* If there were the slightest doubt that John referred to himself in ch. xiii. 23—25, this declaration, compared with ver. 20, would remove it. ¶ *Which testifieth—and wrote, &c.* That is, the disciple who leaned on the breast of Jesus, ver. 20, and of whom it was at least suggested that he should live until after Jerusalem was overthrown, was the same person who wrote this gospel. He was a personal witness of what he related. ¶ *We know, &c.* He here pledges his veracity that his narrative is true. He is generally supposed to have been now bending under the weight of almost a hundred years; and, at the close of his long and laborious life, he gave this dying testimony to the truth of that gospel which he had preached for about seventy years. Whatever might be thought of an ambitious man, in the strength and pride of life, it is beyond all reasonable suspicion that one in extreme old age, about to fall into the grave, having no possible advantage to hope from deception, should then and

**24** This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

**25** And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which,

under such circumstances solemnly attest a known falsehood. The plural number here used, *we know*, has induced some to regard this verse and the next as an addition by the elders of the church at Ephesus, as an attestation that this gospel was actually written by John, and worthy of implicit belief by all. And others, for similar reasons, have supposed this whole chapter to have been added to the gospel, as originally written. To this, it has been replied, that "it is not uncommon in the Apostle John, to speak of himself either in the third person singular, as in ch. xiii. 23, &c.; xviii. 15, 16; xix. 26, 27, 35; xx. 2, &c.; or in the first person plural, as in ch. i. 14, 16; 1 John i. 1, 2, &c. This notion deserves, therefore, to be rated as merely a modern conjecture, opposed to the testimony of all ecclesiastical antiquity, MSS., editions, versions, commentaries, which uniformly attest the last chapter, as much as any other in the book."—*Campbell.*

**25.** *Many other things, &c.* The reference is probably to miracles in particular. See John xx. 30. John may also have intended to include the discourses delivered by our Lord, as things done by him. Some of these are recorded by the other evangelists. Many, beyond all doubt, were never recorded. Yet we have abundant reason to rejoice that so many, both of discourses and miracles, have been placed on record, as to furnish full proof that Jesus was the Son of God, or the Messiah, and to instruct us in all we absolutely need to know, in this life, concerning the character and purposes of our heavenly Father, and our own duty and destination. ¶ *I suppose, &c.* Evidently an hyperbole, such as is not unusual among writers of all nations. "This is a very strong eastern expression to represent the great number of miracles, which Jesus wrought. But, however strong and strange this expression may seem to us of the western world, we find sacred and other authors using hyperboles of the like kind and signification."—*Pearce.* ¶ *Amen.* This

if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself

could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

word is almost universally rejected here by critics, as spurious.

¶¶. The evangelists uniformly assert that our Lord repeatedly "showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs," Acts i. 3; that is, he was seen and handled by his disciples; he conversed with them; and finally they witnessed his departure from the earth. As the fact asserted is of such vital importance, and represented by the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 3—8, as lying at the very foundation of Christianity, a methodical summary, gathered from the four evangelists, may form an appropriate conclusion of the present volume. (1.) The first interview with himself, after his resurrection, was granted by our Lord to Mary Magdalene, who forsook him not while he lived, even in his hour of utmost distress, and who was the first to visit his sepulchre after the sabbath had passed. Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 11—18. (2.) He was next seen by the other women; namely, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and others. Matt. xviii. 9. Compare Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 1, 10. (3.) By two disciples, on their way to Emmaus. Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv. 13—31. (4.) By Peter, or Cephas. Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5. (5.) By ten disciples, Thomas being absent. Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 19, 24. To this appearance Paul is supposed to refer, 1 Cor. xv. 5. Five times, on the day of his resurrection, he was seen in different places by different individuals, not one of whom doubted his identity. (6.) He was next seen, about a week afterwards, by the Eleven, Thomas being present and obtaining the actual demonstration which he demanded as the condition of believing that his Master was truly alive. John xx. 26—29. (7.) By Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, "and two other of his disciples," at the sea of Tiberias. John xxi. 1—14. (8.) By the Eleven, at a mountain in Galilee. Matt. xxviii. 16—18. (9.) By "above five hundred brethren at once,"

1 Cor. xv. 6. This is omitted by all the evangelists; but Paul asserts that "the greater part" of those five hundred witnesses were then living, and ready to testify the fact. (10.) By James. 1 Cor. xv. 7. (11.) By the whole number of the apostles, on the mount of Olives; and "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." Mark xvi. 19; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 1—9; 1 Cor. xv. 7. To these may not improperly be added, (12.) his appearance to Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 8. Such was the evidence, which, during "forty days," Acts i. 3, was given to the apostles, that their Master was truly alive from the dead. And when it is remembered, that they did not expect his resurrection, that they were slow to believe, that they would not believe even on the testimony of their associates, and that each of them subsequently became ready to testify the fact at the hazard and actual loss of life,—there remains no room for doubt that they had ample and conclusive proof of their Lord's identity. We need not hesitate in believing the apostolic testimony. Regarded merely as history, apart from the authority of inspiration, it is entitled to the most unlimited credit. We cannot disbelieve it, without renouncing all faith in human testimony. But besides the stamp of truth impressed on the narrative, regarded as human testimony, it is sealed also with the signet of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God for the full assurance he hath given of the resurrection of our Lord, and the cheering and sustaining hope of immortality which that assurance imparts and confirms. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." And when thus brought, their deliverance from sin and death, and misery, shall be completed; "neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Luke xx. 36; 1 Thess. iv. 14.









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